

THE HOWARTH DEFECTON

Tory schisms laid bare by shock decision

STEVE BOGGAN and COLIN BROWN

Leading Tories reacted to Alan Howarth's defection with almost universal shock and anger yesterday, though there was genuine sympathy and respect for him among MPs on the left of the Tory party.

Brian Mawhinney, the Conservative Party chairman, dismissed the defection as "eccentric" and "bizarre".

Gillian Shephard, the Secretary of State for Education and Employment, appeared to suggest there was a need to be concerned about Mr Howarth's mental health. "There is a certain vindictiveness in the choice of the date of the announcement. What seems to me to be rather a vindictive decision is out of character with his usual function."

"I am quite concerned about what I think this demonstrates about his state of mind. He is obviously going through quite

a turbulent time," she said on *Sky News*.

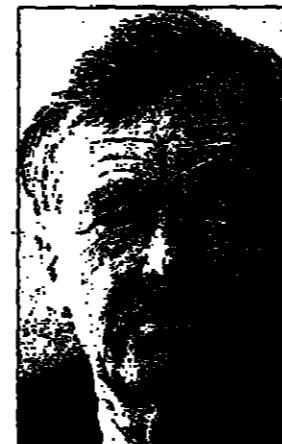
Alan Clark, the outspoken former defence minister, said: "The kindest thing you can say about Alan Howarth is that he is baty. It is an act of complete treachery."

Perhaps the most aggrieved at being kept in the dark over his decision – save for the officials of his own constituency association – was the Prime Minister.

Mr Major said: "I profoundly disagree with his analysis of the Conservative Party but nothing will distract us from the task ahead."

Chancellor Kenneth Clarke said Mr Howarth had lost his political way, and Deputy Prime Minister Michael Heseltine said the MP was "out of touch with what the public want".

But Labour was grieved at its propaganda coup, with deputy party leader John Prescott hailing it as a devastating blow for Mr Major on the eve of the Tory



Chorus of disapproval: (from left) Conservative Party Chairman Dr Brian Mawhinney, former defence minister Alan Clark and Public Services Minister Roger Freeman

conference, on which so much depends. He said: "Alan Howarth is a well respected and senior member of the Conservative Party who has now made it clear he can't stomach the Tory party lurching further and further to the Right."

Derek Foster, Labour chief whip, said: "I am confident that the Parliamentary Labour Party will gladly accept Alan Howarth's application for the Labour whip and welcome him to their ranks."

"We all recognise that this is

a very significant conversion, especially from a man of proven ability who will not have taken his decision lightly," he said.

Speaking on *the BBC's Breakfast with Frost*, Mr Mawhinney said he believed Mr Howarth should immediately

stand down and fight a by-election – something the defector has no intention of doing.

"The people of Stratford-on-Avon will form their own conclusions about a man who won't offer himself to them," he said. "It seems to be a bit of an

eccentric decision, doesn't it? He made an announcement that affects him and deprives the people of Stratford of their representative that they voted for.

"The idea that Alan is doing his electors some sort of favour by moving from supporting this Government to aligning himself in the Opposition with Dennis Skinner and Tony Benn and John Prescott – frankly, that is bizarre."

Public Services Minister

Roger Freeman said he had not been surprised by the defection. "Alan Howarth has been increasingly isolated on the backbenches over the last couple of years," he said. "I respect Alan's views, but he's been out of step with the Parliamentary Conservative Party for some considerable period of time and so [the] announcement didn't come as a surprise to me."

"This is a very human problem for him. He clearly felt very strongly that he had more sym-

pathy with the Labour Party. His own views had changed. I think the honourable thing for him to do is resign and stand again."

But backbench colleagues on the left of the party were sympathetic. A former minister, Jim Lester, said: "Alan has made some very nice speeches over a very considerable period of time and so [the] announcement didn't come as a surprise to me."

Former Prime Minister Sir Edward Heath urged other one-nation Tories not to follow Mr Howarth. "What I would say to all those who think the same way in the party is, 'It is not to leave the party, but to do everything we possibly can to persuade the party to carry out the policies which we used to have,'" he said.

Among others, there was some understanding, although no indication of any further defection plans.

Question of morals: Government attitudes towards social issues proved to be decisive in the dramatic move to Labour

Signals that were there for all to see

PATRICIA WYNNE DAVIES
Political Correspondent

The Conservative Party swung frantically into the biggest damage limitation exercise in recent political history yesterday. The tactic was basically smear; the message, to question Alan Howarth's state of mind.

But the notion of an overwrought man taking leave of his senses looks pretty far from the reality. The 51-year-old MP is one of the most intelligent, assiduous and thoughtful. Moreover, the conversion – or certainly the realisation that he could no longer support today's Tories – has been long been discernible.

Elected as MP for Stratford-upon-Avon in 1983, the blue-chip seat once occupied by John Profumo, he was one of the dozen founder-members of the Thatcherite No Turning Back group that year. In all, he served – apparently contentedly – under Margaret Thatcher from 1979 to 1992. But while a staunch supporter of keynote Tory policies such as opt-out schools and student loans (along with transforming polytechnics into universities as a minister) his affinity with fellow No Turners such as Peter Lilley, now Secretary of State for Social Security, and Michael Forsyth, Secretary of State for Scotland, was limited.

From the early 1990s, an unease with the direction of the party began to reveal itself in parliamentary debates with a relentless regularity, and later, in newspaper articles. He voted against his pet hate, the Jobseekers' Bill, voted for Labour's amendment in the debate on the Nolan Committee recommendations, rallied against restrictions on income support for mortgage payments and abstained on a Labour Opposition Day debate on funding the teachers' pay rise. On one occasion, a Labour MP invited him to cross the floor.

The birth of a disabled child, now 10, in the mid-1980s may also have sown the seeds of a growing interest in social issues, while remaining "dry" on the economy and committed to low inflation. Last year he joined Labour MPs in a Trafalgar Square rally to protest at the Government's rejection of a backbench disabled rights Bill. He had used his first vote to help return Harold Wilson's 1966 Labour administration to power. By the 1974 election, the middle-class Westminster School master had reverted to type by voting Tory. But by last year he was warning in a newspaper article on the eve of the Tories' Bournemouth conference that they must stop pandering to the "retributive" right.

In a sign of a future readiness



Changing places: (from left) Mr Howarth at Central Office in 1979, campaigning for disabled rights and arriving at the BBC yesterday for an interview



The career of a man whose conservative background clashed with his developing moral convictions

Home: 11 June 1944. Father: Captain, Royal Artillery. Mother: Housewife. School: Dulwich College. Education: Dulwich College. Employment: 1965-77: Served as senior research assistant to Lord Montgomery. He was ghost-writer for Montgomery's book *History of Warfare*. 1968-74: Assistant master of Westminster School. Voted Conservative for the first time in 1974.

Family: In 1967, married Gillian (now Mrs Howarth) and they have two sons and two daughters. They separated last year.

Employment: 1977-81: Director of Conservative Research Department and Vice-Chairman of the Conservative Party. 1981-82: Under-Secretary of State at the Department of Education and Science. 1982-85: MP for Stratford-upon-Avon. 1985-9: Secretary at the Conservative Party Conference.

Interests: Governor of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre. Ran the London marathon for disabled charities and is a member of the British dyslexia association. His interests are reading, education, the arts and charities and these are reflected in the several books he has written which include *Changing Charities and Save Our Schools and Arts: The Way Ahead*.

Disillusion spreads on Tory left

If hard proof is needed of Alan Howarth's deepening misgivings about his own party, look no further than this year's debates on the Jobseekers' Bill.

"Are the unemployed to be treated as criminals?" he said of the Jobseekers' Allowance. "What will it do to the morale of our society to proceed in this way? ... What will it do to the public service ethos to create arbitrary powers, systematically encourage officials to disqualify claimants even more severely than at present?" he asked.

"Is it to appease the consciences of the affluent so that they can feel more comfortable, believing that those who are poor are feckless and fiddling the system?"

No wonder he was under suspicion for months from government whips as likely to jump ship. Trying to engage the Prime Minister in a debate about the Bill was like "spitting in the wind", he told *BBC Television's Breakfast with Frost*, yes-

terday. The upshot of his frustration could make moves to put "clear water" between an ever more rightwards-leaning Tory Party and Labour even more explosive than before.

Mr Howarth's friends on the "wet" wing of the Tory party had been feeling disillusioned for months. They fear John Major is being drawn closer to the right wing to ensure its support.

No one else was prepared to follow Mr Howarth yesterday, but his departure could signal an intensification in the battle for the soul of the Tory Party, with the centre-left fearing the Tory leadership will revert to a Thatcherite agenda of cuts in the welfare state to pay for tax cuts as a pre-election bribe.

The probability of further defections – perhaps to the Liberal Democrats – remains small. But that is arguably of limited consolation to a Prime Minister who thought he had reuni-

fied his party. Drosses of sitting Tory MPs are voting embarrassingly with their feet by announcing they will not contest the next election, including thoughtful minds such as former minister George Walden, the MP for Buckingham.

The fears of a right-wing party coup by Mr Portillo, now Secretary of State for Defence, were eased by the leadership contest, which secured Mr Major's position. The appointment of Michael Heseltine as Deputy Prime Minister appeared to put the left of the party in the ascendancy. But Mr Howarth yesterday described Mr Major's victory as "hollow". "There's a kind of listlessness; there is a lack of vision, a lack of clear determination as to where the Conservative Party should go."

Another left-of-centre MP said: "It settled Mr Major's position, but the drift to the right is inexorable."

Many on the left, such as Peter Temple-Morris, MP for Leominster, are supporters of the Liberal Democrats after the election – the leap to Labour would be too great. "The Tory Party is an uncomfortable place for us at the moment. The sooner there is an election the better," one unhappy Tory said.

A degree of unhappiness will undoubtedly be the future lot of Mr Howarth. But the sheer inevitability of it was becoming plain to see. Mr Howarth was the sole Tory MP invited to the February launch of *The State We're In*, the best-selling book by Will Hutton, post-Keynesian guru of left-of-centre economics. Mr Howarth, whose invocations of Burke and Disraeli are legion, grimmed when asked what he was doing in the Tory Party. Later, when Mr Portillo was suggesting Britain should leave the International Labour Organisation, he instantly signed up to Labour MP Denis MacShane's Early Day Motion deplored the move.

PATRICIA WYNNE DAVIES and COLIN BROWN

Few careers survive defection

STEVE BOGGAN

Winston Churchill said it was better to change your mind than be wrong all the time. He was possibly the most famous turncoat of the 20th Century, switching from Tory to Liberal in 1904, and later switching back again.

When he jumped ship to the Liberals, he admitted he had "ratted" on the Conservatives. When he defected back, he famously announced he was "re-ratting".

There have been about 70 defections in the past 60 years, but Alan Howarth is thought to be the first from Conservative to Labour. Defections in the other

direction are rare but not unknown. Reg Prentice defected from Labour, with whom he had served as a Cabinet minister, to the Tories in 1977 and went on to hold office in a Conservative government.

The largest single defection came in 1981 when 27 Labour MPs, led by David Owen and Bill Rodgers, formed the SDP with one Conservative MP, Christopher Brocklebank-Fowler.

Many of the founders discovered that defection spelled a premature end to their political careers – particularly for the leaders. Mr Brocklebank-Fowler was ejected by his Tory constituency at the next general election and never recovered politically.

Bruce Douglas-Mann agreed to fight a by-election as an SDP candidate but lost to the Conservatives in June 1982.

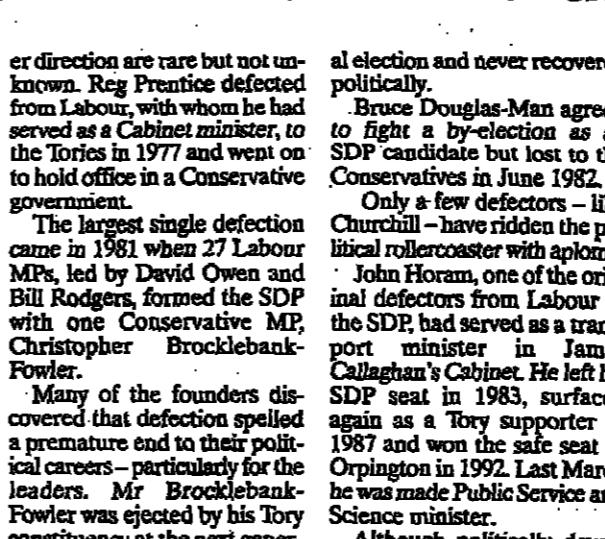
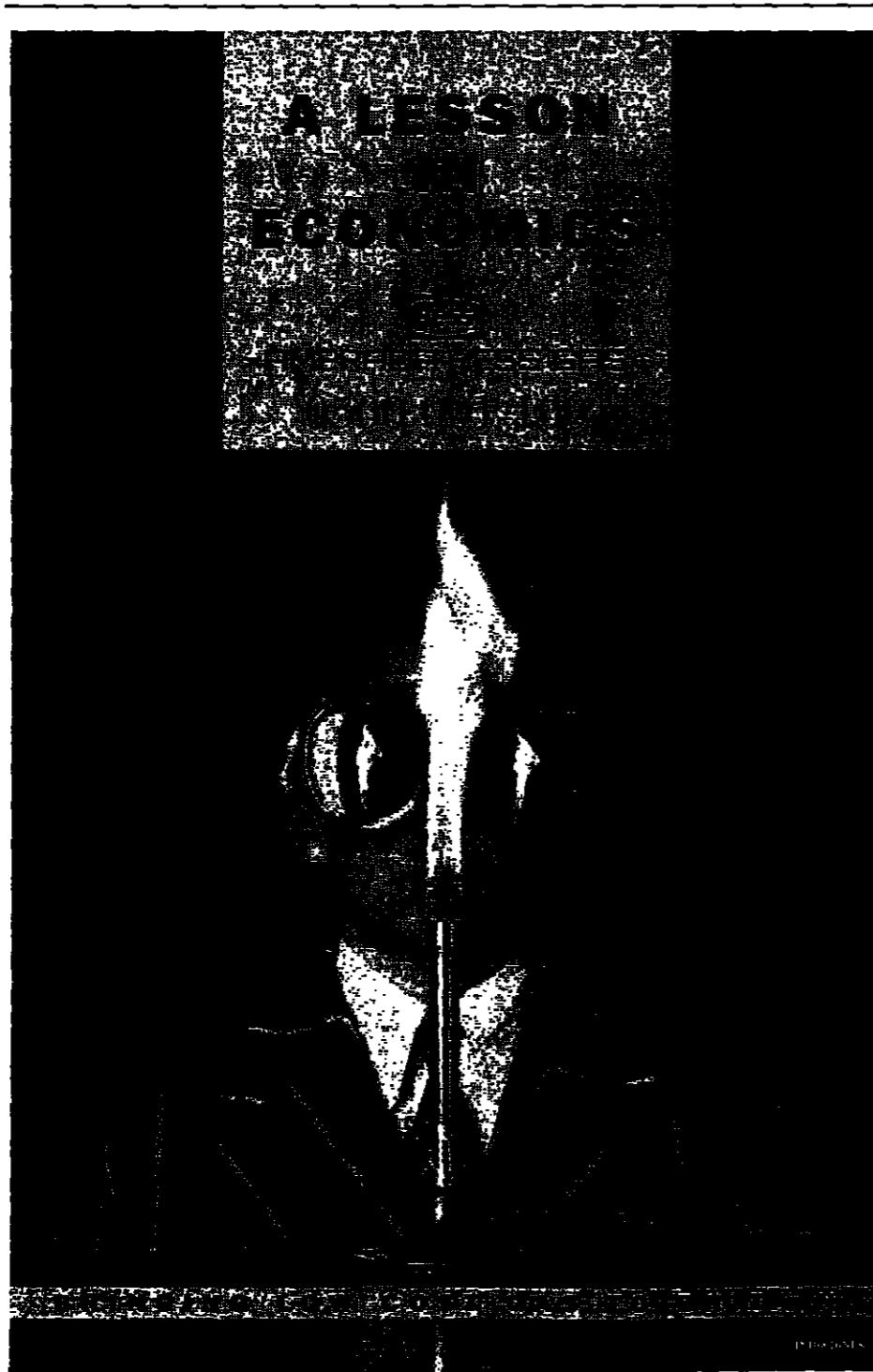
Only a few defectors – like Churchill – have ridden the political rollercoaster with aplomb. John Horan, one of the original defectors from Labour to the SDP, had served as a transport minister in James Callaghan's Cabinet. He left his SDP seat in 1983, surfaced again as a Tory supporter in 1987 and won the safe seat of Orpington in 1992. Last March he was made Public Service and Science minister.

Although politically devas-

tating for John Major on the eve of the Tory Party conference, the effects of the defection on the alignment of parties is likely to be short-term, according to the political historian Professor Peter Hennessy.

"I don't think we will see radical change coming from this," he said. "We won't see a more right-wing, nationalist, anti-European breakaway group emerging to counter the defection and we won't see a group following Alan Howarth."

"Ultimately, it takes more than the principled stance of a kind, understated, gentlemanly scholar like Alan Howarth to shift the tectonic plates of British politics."



Churchill: 'Ratted' from the Tories and 're-ratted' back

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THE WAR OF INNOCENTION

Talk of a Tory town: Constituents astonished and bemused as MP's decision sends shock waves through the heart of England

High drama played out in home of the Bard



MATTHEW BRACE

*False face must hide what the
false heart doth know — Macbeth*

Behind drawn curtains at the Conservative Association headquarters in the home of Shakespeare yesterday the latest act in a weekend of high drama was being played out.

Angry and shocked, the association's executive met in emergency session to discuss the defection of their MP, Alan Howarth, to the Labour Party. Only after the meeting had broken up were the drapes pulled back to reveal, in one front room, a portrait of that other famous floor-crosser, Sir Winston Churchill.

The irony may have been lost on Don Rushton, the local party chairman, who read a prepared statement: "We are disappointed that Alan dismally chose to reveal his decision through a Sunday newspaper. We are astonished that ... a former government minister has chosen to join the Labour Party when only a short time ago he had been so fervent in his support for John Major."

Telephone lines had been busy, he said, with calls of anger and disbelief at Mr Howarth's actions, and of support for the Conservative Party.

Debate among Stratfordians was already raging. Locals were out for Mr Howarth's blood — calling for his immediate resignation on the grounds that he

should not continue as a Labour MP for an overwhelmingly Conservative seat.

In the town's pubs, the content and quality of the previous day's political performance was discussed. The lead character was variously described as "brave", "principled" and "a scoundrel who let down all those who voted for him".

However, the townfolk agreed it was the most exciting thing to happen in their corner of England since the Sixties scandal over John Profumo, a former Tory member for Stratford. Only the tourists, mugs in hand, failed to raise an eyebrow at the mention of the Government's latest political upset.

Across from the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, the long bar of the Dirty Duck pub was alive with chatter, and two streets away in the Vintner Wine Bar, the young staff seemed pleased, if not a little perplexed, about their town's new political status.

Verity Spencer, a 22-year-old waitress, said: "I've grown up in a Tory environment in a 'Tory family,'" she said. "I've heard what it was like when Labour was in — with all the strikes — that information has an effect on you. Now we have a Labour MP; it has made me think, 'Well, let's have a real look at what all the parties mean'."

Elsewhere, Peter Jones, a retired Anglican clergyman from Stratford-on-Avon, said he voted Conservative in the last



Bemused: The quiet constituency of Stratford (above). Top left: The local Tory chairman Don Rushton waves a response to Alan Howarth's letter

Photograph: Philip Meech

election and would never consider switching his allegiance to Labour.

He said of Mr Howarth's defection: "I think it is a foolish move... I don't think people will support him just for crossing over to the other side of the House. I don't think he has given his party the chance to make clear its policies and he hasn't even waited for the autumn budget."

Others saw Mr Howarth's step as courageous: Andrew Smith, a shop worker in the town, said: "I think it was right of Mr Howarth to do what he

felt was correct. I voted Tory last time but not again. I think many Conservative voters will be affected by this."

John Vereker, the leader of the Conservative group on the county council, said he understood Mr Howarth's disillusionment with the Conservative Party but was upset not to see him try to change it from within. He said: "Quite clearly it is for Alan to make his own decisions based on what his conscience tells him. For my own personal point of view, I believe he could have achieved more

from within the party than by doing this."

Stratford's Labour contingent spent the day holed up in a temporary press office. Its branch secretary Ann Grosvenor said that despite the radical move, Mr Howarth might not lose quite as many friends as people were suggesting. "Our membership has more than doubled over the past year and I can tell you he would take some voters with him if he did stand as our candidate in Stratford," she said.

However, she added that the

likelihood of his name being on the voting sheet at the next General Election was slim.

"Our final meeting to decide on a candidate is on October 24, so I don't think he really has a chance. And I think we would want him to have some sort of probationary period," she said.

Away from the political murmur of his shocked constituents in Stratford, Mr Howarth spent the afternoon at his Cotswold-stone farmhouse in the village of Lower Tysoe, on the southern fringes of his large constituency. Admiring the apple

trees in his front garden, he said he had no doubt he had made the right decision.

"I feel a profound release and an exhilaration," he said.

Mr Howarth said he had many misgivings about Tory policy, but it was the stirring atmosphere of the Labour Party Conference in Brighton last week which finally made him switch allegiance.

Bidding farewell to the media yesterday afternoon he urged them to indulge in the fruits of his labour. "Help yourself to an apple on your way out.

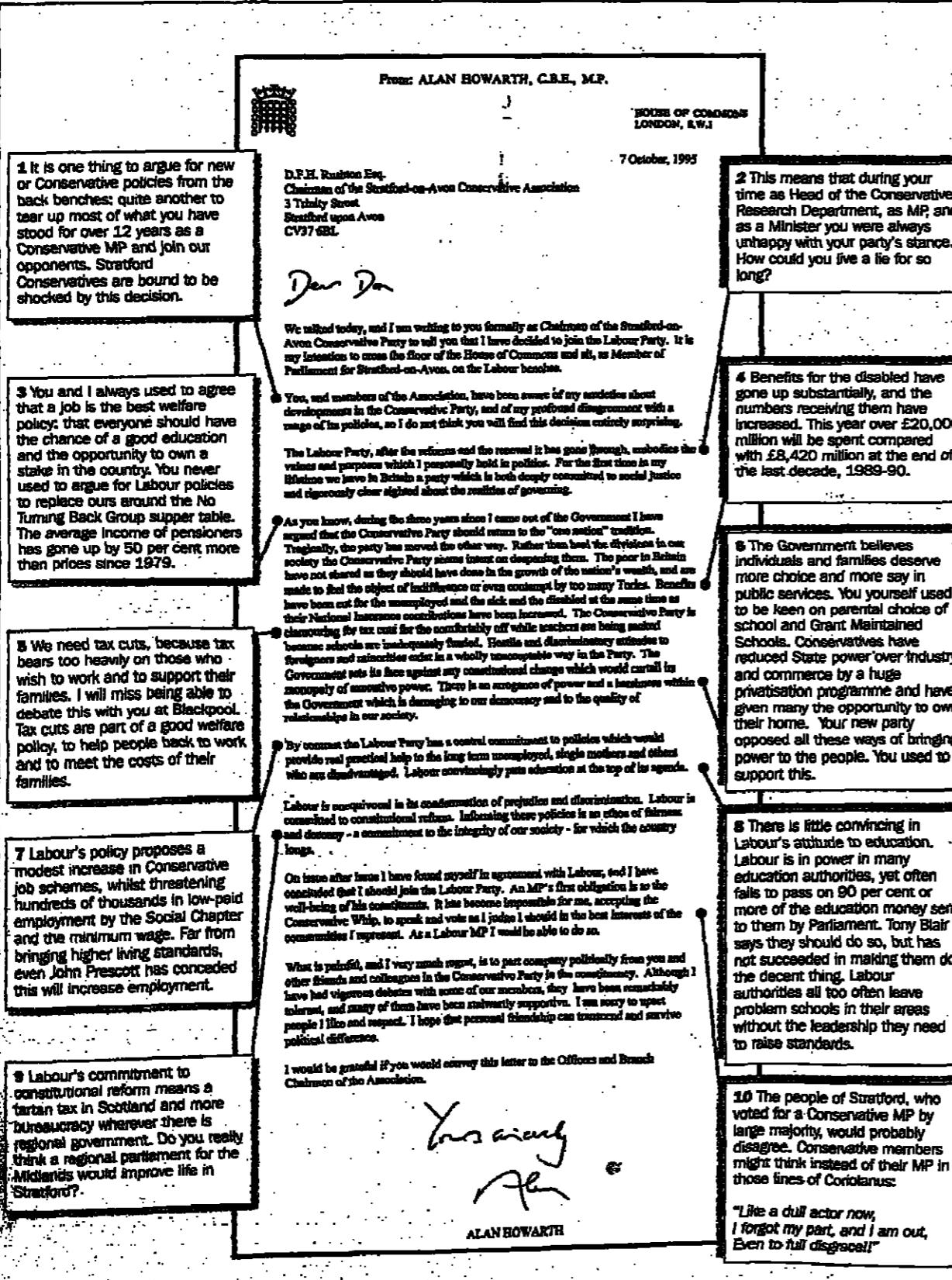
I recommend the tree by the gate, they're the best." Little Tysoe then breathed a sigh of relief and continued its peaceful Sunday afternoon.

A few doors down from Mr Howarth's house, a farmer stood smiling in his vegetable patch from where he had been watching the day's events.

"Seen it all before," he said. "We had Thatcher up here once to see him. Helicopters and police everywhere. None of it really means anything in the long run. Life just goes on, doesn't it?"

That letter: a 10-point response

John Redwood, the right-wing former Cabinet minister defeated by John Major in a leadership battle, challenges Alan Howarth's reasons for defecting



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news

MoD up in arms over sponsor plan

CHRIS BLACKHURST

British Aerospace, GEC and other defence suppliers could soon have their own "sponsored" units in the armed forces under plans currently being discussed in Whitehall.

The concept of a "Sponsored Reserve", where contractors lend employees to the Ministry of Defence in time of emergency to help service and maintain equipment, was first raised by Malcolm Rifkind when he was Defence Secretary and is now being considered by his successor Michael Portillo. A Reserve Forces Bill is expected to be included in the forthcoming Queen's Speech.

However, sponsorship and other measures mooted for the reserve are meeting with stiff resistance in some quarters of the MoD. Under the new sponsorship scheme, as part of a contract to supply equipment, the manufacturer would agree also to provide the staff to service the

equipment. Such personnel would receive some military training, although they would not be required to take part in front-line fighting.

But some in the MoD regard this hi-tech civilian force as another example of privatisation creeping into the military. They fear for the engineers, mechanics and other regulars whose jobs could be under threat from civilians seconded from companies eager to win orders.

Another proposal which Ministry critics fear is designed to obscure shortfalls in the regular forces is the widening of call-out rules for reservists to cover peace-keeping, humanitarian and disaster relief operations. At the same time, those with specialist expertise – linguists, medics and technicians – will be encouraged to join a new High Readiness Reserve, which officials admit has been conceived as a stop-gap for skills shortages in the regular forces. Members of the HRR

Labour are preparing for battle, believing the reserve is being used as a smoke screen for failings in the regular forces. David Clark MP, shadow defence spokesman, said: "We want a properly resourced armed forces, not a part-time



Return of the native: Nobel Literature laureate Seamus Heaney meeting the Irish President Mary Robinson in Dublin. Photograph: Eamonn Farrell

IN BRIEF

Boy dies in fall from father's tanker

A six-year-old boy died after falling from a milk tanker being driven by his father. The child went under the vehicle at a junction of the A46 by-pass on the outskirts of Lincoln yesterday morning.

The tanker was owned by G Easton and Sons Ltd, of Alford and Lincoln. The company's transport manager, Andrew Easton, said last night: "We are all very sad about the news. The last I heard from the police, the driver was down at the police station and they are asking to have the vehicle inspected."

Britons shot in Moroccan hotel attack

Police in Morocco were hunting for an off-duty policeman, Mustapha Hamouch, 37, who shot dead two Britons, Martin and Margaret Gower, of Ruislip, Middlesex, in a hotel in Tangier. Also injured in the random attack were Patricia Sharrett, who suffered back wounds and was flown back to Britain last night, and Charnelle Barker, 12, of Bradwell, Norfolk, who had hand injuries.

Fox-hunting clash

A British Field Sports Society official has been charged with a public order offence. Alastair Jackson, a former master of the Cattistock Foxhounds and southeast spokesman for the BFFS, was arrested in Yeovil, Somerset, after allegedly punching a hunt saboteur. He will appear before Yeovil magistrates on 20 November.

Windsurfing fatality

A 55-year-old windsurfer died on Lake Bala, North Wales, despite a tempest by onlookers to bring him ashore and revive him. Police said the man was from Llandudno, Gwynedd.

Lord Habgood rebukes media

Lord Habgood, former Archbishop of York, in the Priory Memorial Lecture on BBC Radio 4, accused the media of using soap comments and flip dismissals to perpetuate "a culture of contempt".

National Lottery draw

Three tickets shared the £9.2m jackpot in Saturday's lottery draw. The winning numbers were: 28, 37, 10, 30, 36, 22; the bonus, 45.

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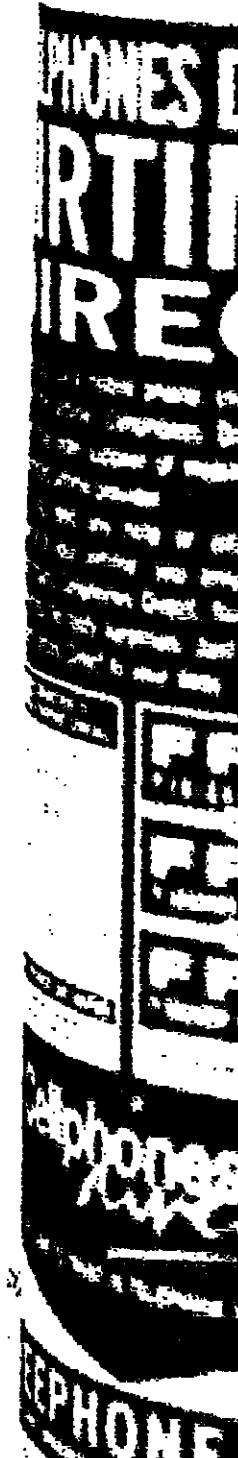
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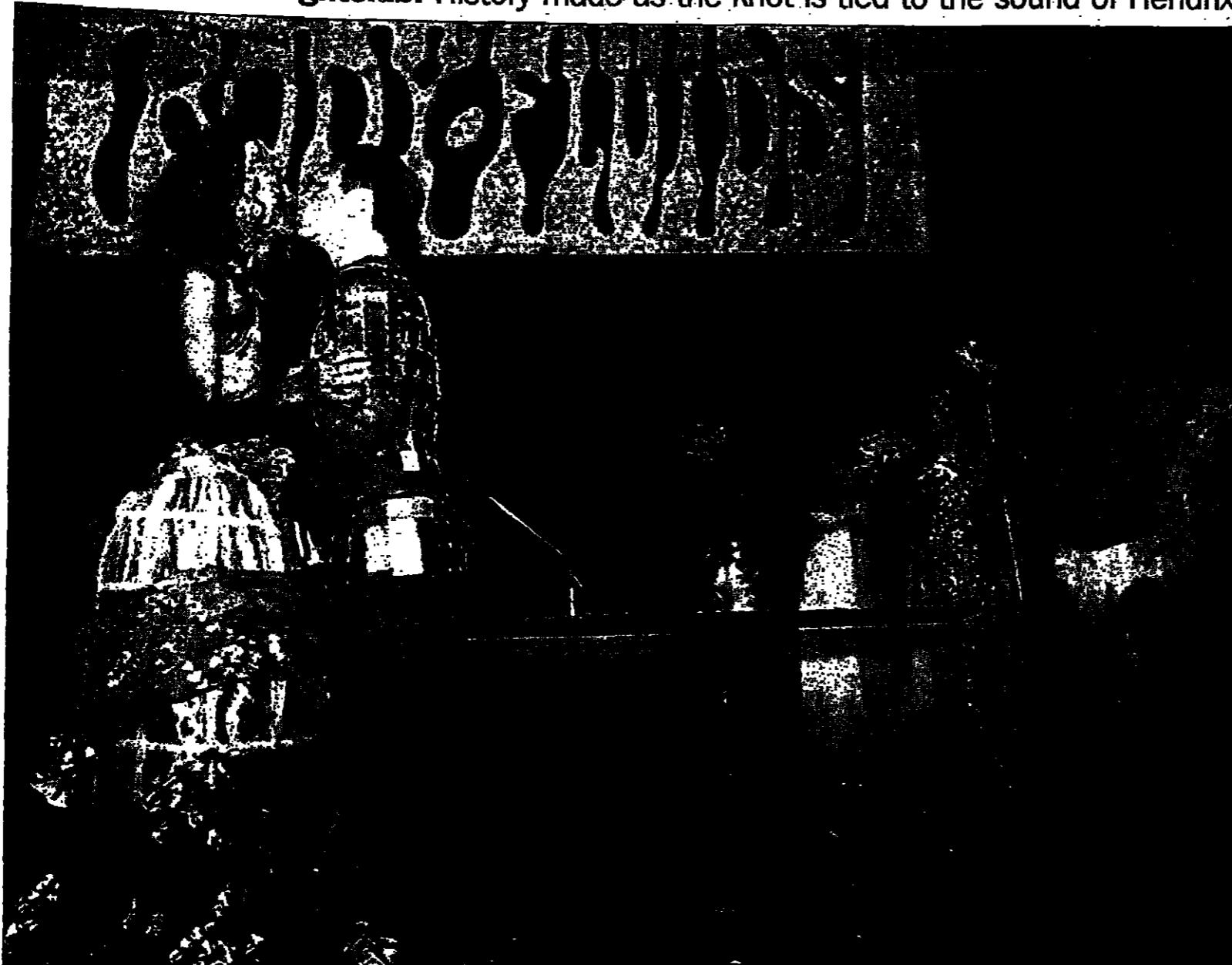
*Album of the Year
at this year's
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COLUMBIA



Wedding in the nightclub: History made as the knot is tied to the sound of Hendrix



Club wed: Alison David and Todd Faith during their wedding service at the Hacienda club

Photograph: Craig Easton

Couple rock to marriage made in the Hacienda

DECCA AITKENHEAD

A couple made marital history yesterday, as the first pair to wed in a British night club. Manchester's Hacienda club hosted the ceremony, followed by a twelve-hour extravaganza of installation art, alternative music and live performances which included the groom's, own 'Body Fluids' safe sex show.

Alison David, 22, a singer from London, married Manchester video director Todd Faith, 35, on stage before an audience of 1,500 friends and relatives to the strains of *Here Comes The Bride*, played on Jimmy Hendrix-style rock guitar and flanked by a best man wearing a white loin cloth and wings. The couple exchanged vows using microphones. The bride wore a swirling hoop and hologrammed dress of love hearts, the groom, a medieval outfit.

The couple's mothers then

appeared on stage and the four sang vows written by the newlyweds. An altar was provided and Alison's mother, a reverend, gave a blessing. An organist had been booked but was forbidden to play at the night club by his church.

An eclectic marathons of entertainments ensued. The bride and her band, Life's Addiction, performed, and followed by Todd's AIDS awareness show, for which volunteers came forward to dress as condoms.

A fashion show, a tea dance, a jazz quintet, poetry readings, films and other live bands followed. It was the first wedding to be given a club logo - Love Live '95.

The worlds of fashion and music were well represented among the guests. Dress code for men ranged from morning suits to glittering dresses, while babes in arms mingled with face painted New Agers. Film crews and photographers from

style and fashion magazines were present.

Despite the highly modern nature of the occasion, the bride said the couple's motives were entirely traditional. "A wedding signifies, to me, romance and love and a belief in commitment to a relationship. It doesn't signify a ball and chain - it's simply the most romantic thing you could ever do."

The wedding followed last April's change in the law, which allowed any venue to apply for a licence to host a civil marriage ceremony. The new law stipulates that the premises must be duly dignified and not detract from the solemnity of marriage. To date, 700 new venues have been licensed, including Granada TV studios and Aston Villa FC.

"Some authorities do appear to have taken a liberal interpretation of the guidelines," commented the Office of Census and Population Studies.

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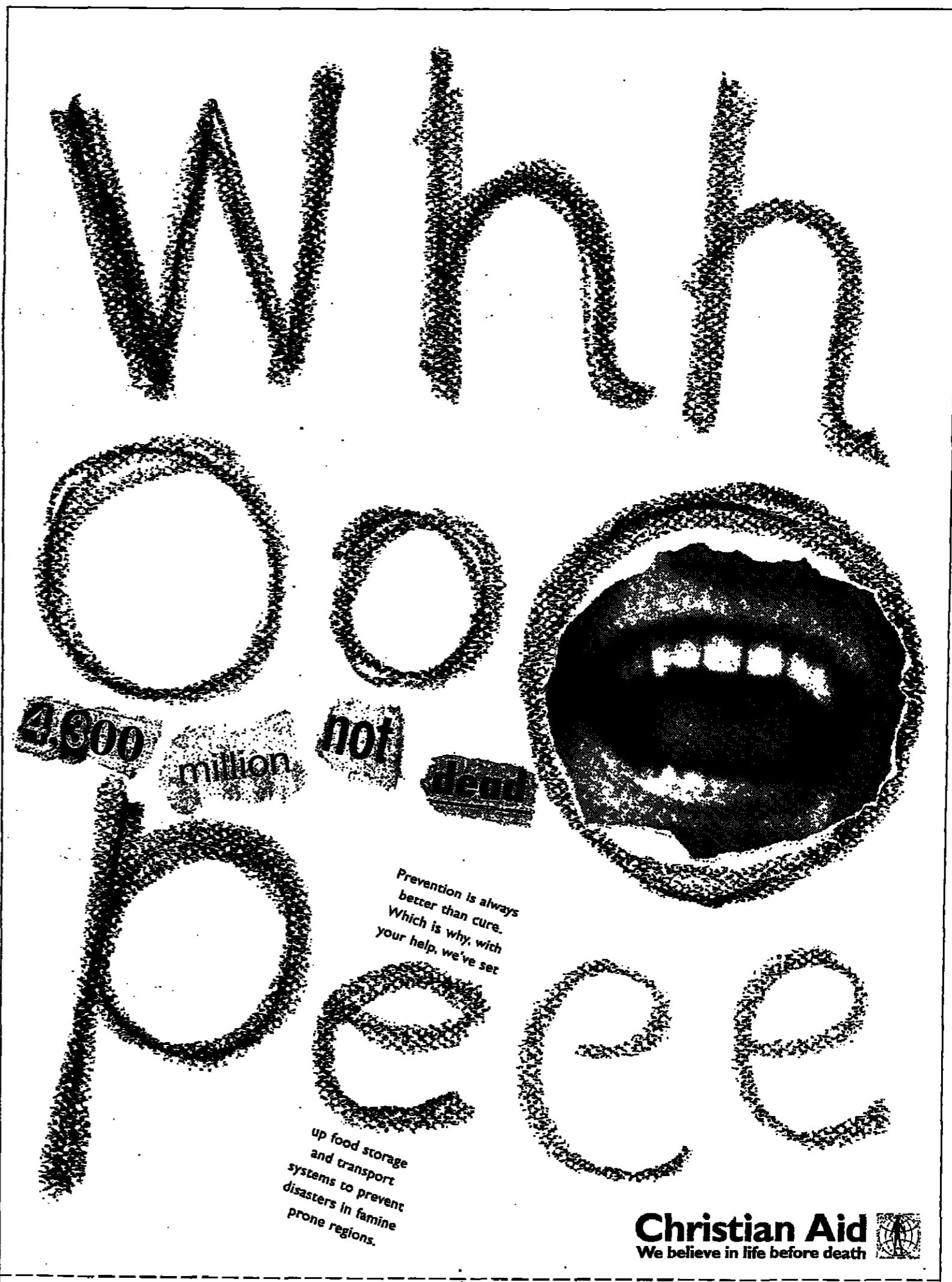
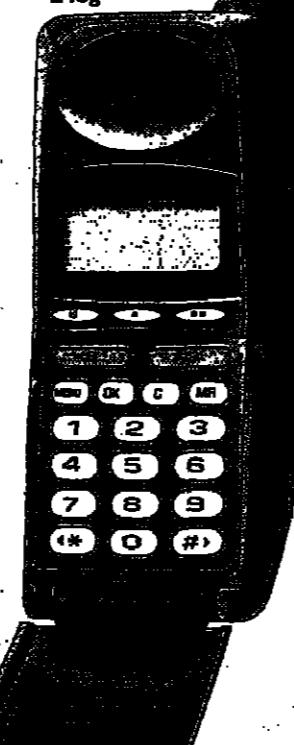
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Fascists plan to wreck England's night in Oslo

JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

The extreme right-wing group Combat 18, is planning violent disruptions during England's football match against Norway on Wednesday, according to an internal newsletter.

Wednesday night's game will be the first international England have played on foreign soil since rioting stopped their match earlier this year against the Irish Republic in Dublin. Combat 18 were believed to have been responsible for orchestrating much of the violence in Dublin, including making fascist salutes, shouting anti-IRA slogans and hurling missiles. The rioting in February resulted in the arrest of 41 English supporters and three Irish fans. About 40 people were injured.

The British authorities and the Football Association are desperate to avoid any repetition of the mayhem in Ireland that led to fighting on the streets, particularly in the run-up to European Championships in England next year.

However, *Searchlight*, the anti-fascist magazine, has seen a news bulletin published by Combat 18, in which the or-

ganisation boasts it is going to the game in Oslo for more violence. The high level of policing and intelligence, combined with the expense of getting to Norway, makes it likely that if any trouble does flare up it will happen outside the stadium, probably in bars and clubs.

NCIS will provide "spotters"

who will mingle with the English supporters to help identify known thugs. Norway will refuse entry to any convicted "supporters" and have vowed to prosecute troublemakers.

A spokeswoman for NCIS said the football intelligence officers did not have any evidence to suggest Combat 18 or any formal organisation was preparing to go to Norway. In the past NCIS has argued that groups of hooligans were often aligned to specific football clubs rather than political organisations.

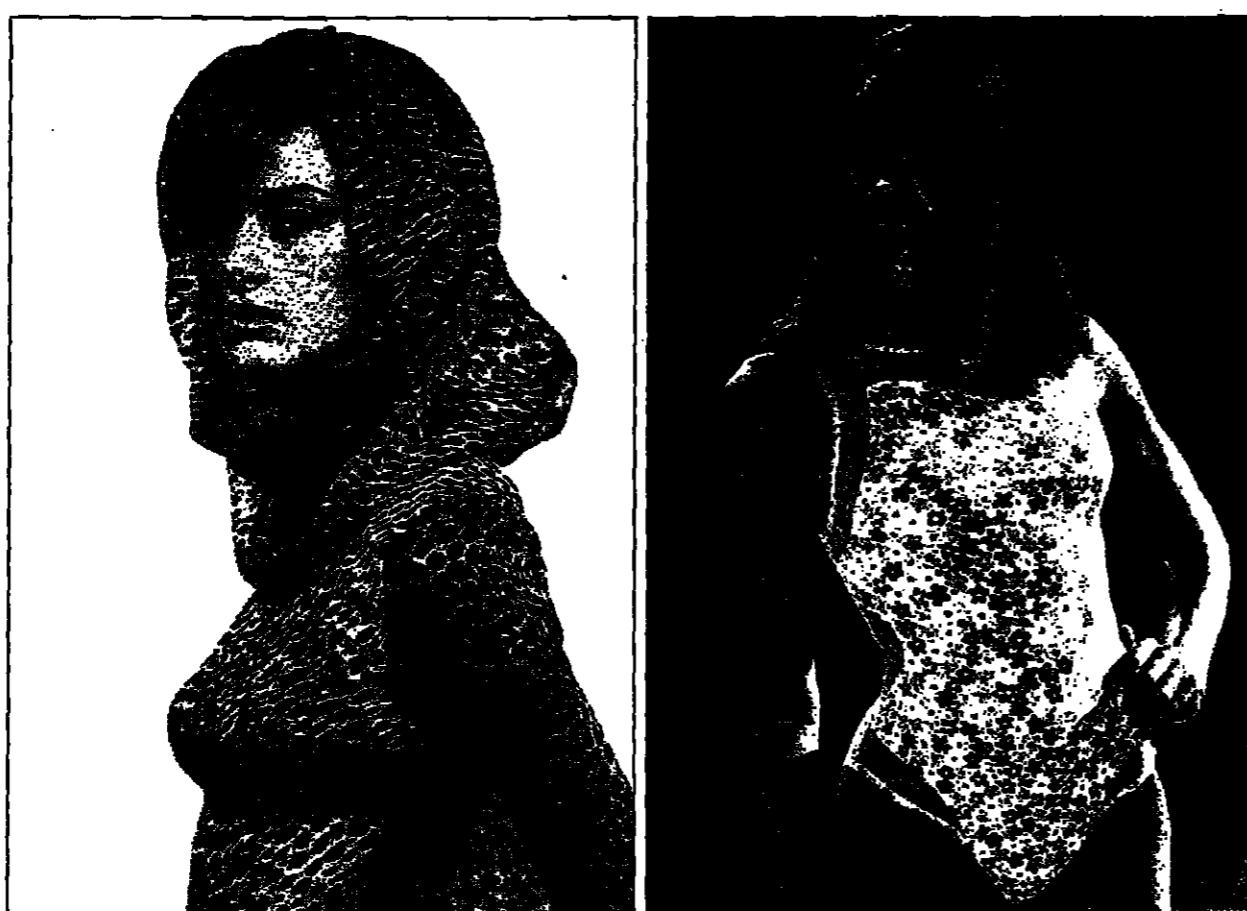
She said: "There's always a risk when England are playing away. There could be trouble, but because so few are likely to go to the match and with the co-operation of the Norwegian police, we believe it is unlikely we shall see serious disturbances."

She said NCIS had received reports of people from British right wing groups linking up with Danish counterparts.

They have predicted that up

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Seeing spots: Sheer chiffon leopard-print hooded kaftan from Dolce & Gabbana's 1996 collection (left) and an Instante swim-suit, modelled by Naomi Campbell, at the Milan fashion shows

Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

Blood service crisis as staff exodus bites

LOUISE JURY

The threat of closure hanging over a third of Britain's blood transfusion centres has caused a massive exodus of qualified staff, bringing the service close to breaking point.

The *Independent* has discovered that Lancaster has lost three-fifths of its qualified personnel, Liverpool one-third – including a senior scientific officer, who left for a job in Switzerland – and Broomwood in Essex two-thirds of staff, since the closure proposals were announced. Attracting qualified replacements is proving difficult.

While all the staff emphasised that professional pride ensured blood was safe, many claimed the system was "showing signs of stress".

The findings emerge as the National Blood Authority comes under fire yesterday for exporting factor eight, a vital

blood by-product, despite fears that making money from donors might jeopardise their good will.

Radical reforms to the blood transfusion service were recommended in September last year in an independent consultants' report aimed at trimming £10m from its £135m annual budget.

After consultation, the National Blood Authority, which runs the service, handed proposals to the Government suggesting closing a third of the 15 regional centres.

But a decision has been continually delayed amid a series of embarrassments including the faulty Tita bags scandal and a row over proposed sponsorship by Ribena and McVitie's. Staff claim the uncertainty has created a form of "planner's blight". One insider said: "Unless all your staff have sufficient knowledge, there must be a risk

of the systems falling apart. Unqualified staff have to work mechanically. Things are beginning to slow down."

John Simmons, of the union Manufacturing Science Alliance, said: "The problems are all over the country. They're having difficulties in Leeds and recruitment in Newcastle is pretty grim. Southampton and Cambridge are similar."

After consultation, the National Blood Authority, which runs the service, handed proposals to the Government suggesting closing a third of the 15 regional centres.

At Lancaster, a special quality audit was undertaken on Thursday and Friday because of fears over the impact of the exodus of about 25 out of 40 staff.

A National Blood Authority spokesman denied there was a national problem. "The number of staff leaving has increased but we're seeking to make sure that the service and the product is not affected by that."

are pulling out all the stops to try to keep things running safely."

Andy Ford, the MSF representative in Liverpool, said: "It's just on the edge of a very severe crisis." He claimed only high unemployment in the city enabled them to attract graduates as replacement staff, but they needed two years to train.

Oxford lost its quality assurance manager in Liverpool. He was not replaced due to an embargo on recruiting senior staff.

In Brentwood, Essex, a laboratory worker said: "The qualified staff are working too fast

and the new people miss things, it is not impairing efficiency."

A National Blood Authority spokesman denied there was a national problem. "The number of staff leaving has increased but we're seeking to make sure that the service and the product is not affected by that."

Justice at last for murdered Briton's family

Phil Davison reports on the long path to convicting a millionaire's killers



Shot dead: Howard Bates was silenced by emboldened

The millionaire British businessman Howard Bates came to Miami on 6 February, 1991, to sack Maggie Carr, the young chief accountant of the American surgical supplies company he financed. He had discovered that around \$1m of the money he invested had gone missing.

Mr Bates, a 43-year-old former RAF pilot and father of three, arrived at the north-west Miami headquarters of Bolden Products straight from Miami International Airport but was lured to a dark office by then 27-year-old Carr and the company's chairman, Albert Lucio. There he was gunned down by Carr's former lover, Wayne Merced, while the other two looked on.

After more than four and a half years of investigation, trials and one mistrial, Carr, now 31, was finally convicted of first degree murder by a Miami court at the weekend and automatically sentenced to life imprisonment. Under local law, she will serve 25 years before parole is even considered.

Prosecutors in Florida's Dade County, where a jury convicted Carr, described her as "Bonnie" to Lucio's "Clyde", in the light of the cold-blooded way they organised the killing. However, unlike the historical gangsters, they were not lovers, although Carr and Merced, the man who pulled the trigger, had been once.

Merced, a 28-year-old gas repairman, now serving 43 years in jail after handing himself in, told the county court he had killed Mr Bates on Carr's behalf because he had been a gallant mood. He had hoped to win back the woman who had called off their wedding, describing him as a "ditch digger" who couldn't satisfy her sexual needs. Lucio, serving 40 years, did not testify at Carr's trial.

Mr Bates's disappearance remained a mystery for two years until Merced came forward. He claimed his con-

science was troubling him but may have had an eye on avoiding the death penalty by collaborating against Carr and Lucio. The latter had been chairman of the surgical supplies company, Bolden Products, in which Mr Bates was the chief investor. Together, Carr and Lucio had embezzled close to \$3m from their backers.

When Carr first got wind of Mr Bates's suspicions, she sent Lucio to kill him in England before Christmas 1990. She sent a .357 Magnum pistol, disguised in a large package of hair dryers, to Lucio at the Heathrow Sheraton hotel.

When Lucio went to Mr Bates's home, the businessman wasn't in and he lost his nerve. A maid at the Sheraton discovered the pistol and 49 bullets hidden in his room.

On February 6, Lucio and Carr hired Mr Bates to an unlit office at Bolden Products, where Merced crouched in a corner. Merced shot the Mr Bates with a 9mm pistol and wanted to leave but, according to his testimony, Carr told him: "He's alive and suffering. You're going to have to shoot him again." Merced did so before helping Lucio dispose of the body.

Atlantic invaders thrill birdwatchers

A mini-invasion of American migrants in Britain and Ireland provided the main thrill as thousands of ornithological enthusiasts celebrated World Birdwatch yesterday.

England's top spot for ocean-crossing arrivals was on the Isles of Scilly, with a yellow-rumped warbler and a red-eyed vireo spotted on Tresco Island and another red-eyed vireo on St Mary's. Vireos have also been reported at Hook Head, Ireland. A white-rumped sandpiper, also blown off course while migrating from North to South America for the winter, was seen in Wexford. Monarch butterflies, too, rode the gales over the Atlantic and were seen on the Isles of Scilly, and in Cornwall and Dorset.

But not all feathered attractions were American. In Scotland, bird-watchers travelled north of Aberdeen to see a bee-eater from southern Europe. A million bird-watchers world-wide turned out over the weekend to celebrate an increasingly popular pastime, and to back environment-boosting

campaigns. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, with almost 900,000 members, staged more than 140 promotional sessions in the UK, and BirdLife International united conservation groups with bird-watchers in more than 80 countries, many of which are facing threats to wildlife habitats.

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(AUTOCAR, AUG '95)



news

Scientists await the call to Nobel super-stardom

STEVE CONNOR
and TOM WILKIE

Shortly before 10.30 this morning, Professor Nils Ringertz of the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm will pick up the telephone to tell one of the world's leading scientists that he or she has won the 1995 Nobel Prize for Medicine.

For the winner (the prize can actually be shared among up to three researchers), the award means scientific super-stardom. The mystique of the prize is such that the winners' words and opinions are widely reported and carry weight even on topics far removed from their scientific competence.

Today's announcement will be followed on Wednesday when the Swedish Academy of Sciences reveals the chemistry and the physics awards. This year each prize is worth seven million Swedish krona (£1m).

The scientific Nobels have largely escaped the controversy which the literature prize sometimes attracts. According to Professor Sten Grillner, of the Karolinska's Nobel Assembly, "we are very glad. It has not happened because we have a long process. Each year the Assembly sends out to 3,000 researchers an offer to nominate candidates for the prize".

The request for nominations goes to learned societies, such as the US National Academy of Sciences and Britain's Royal Society, and on a two-yearly rotating basis to large universities such as Oxford, Harvard and Stanford, as well as less well-known ones on a longer cycle. "About 250 to 300 nominate every year," Prof Grillner said, and the nominations arrive at

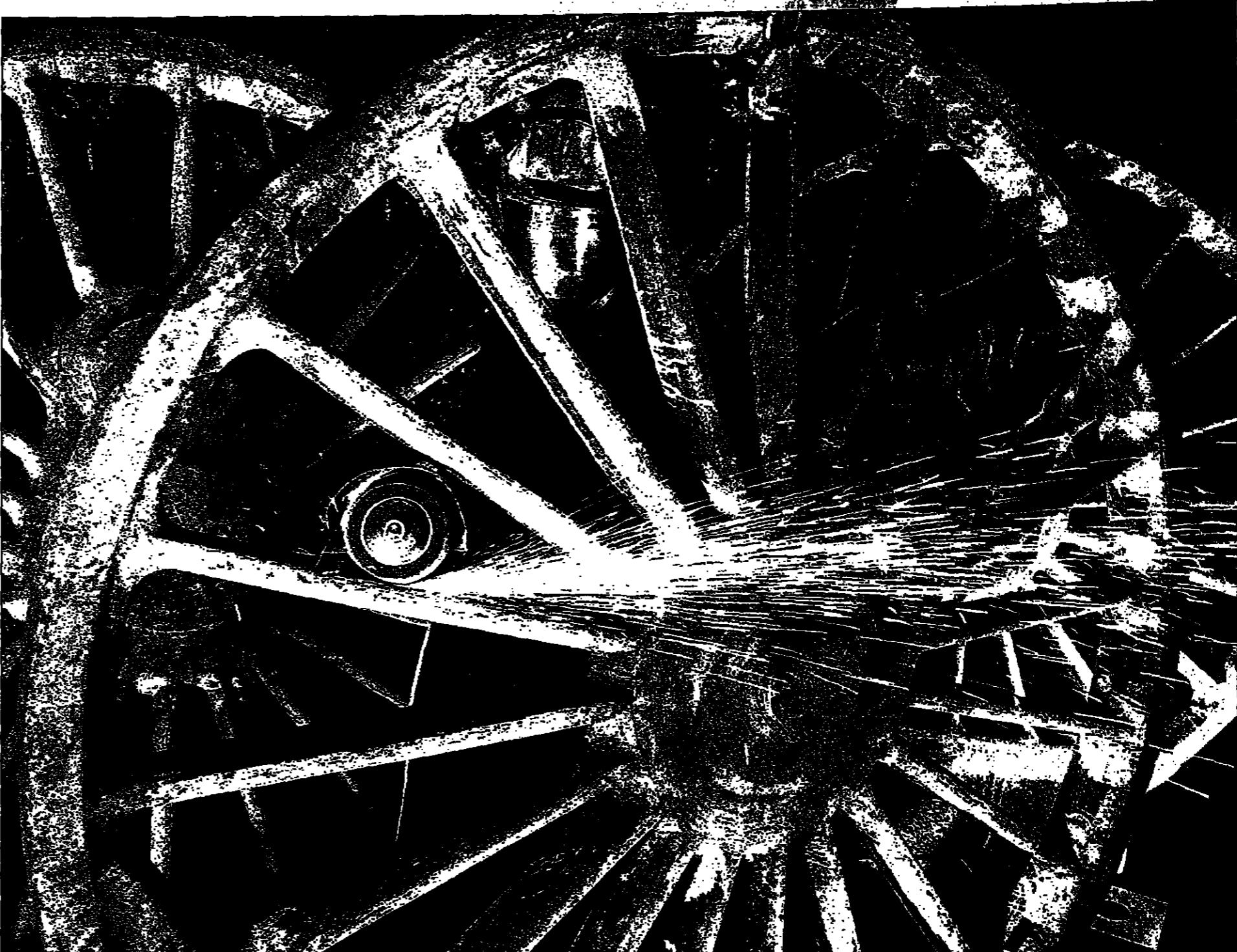
the end of January. "Many can immediately be seen not to be a very likely candidate."

The serious candidates are scrutinised by 15 professors from the Karolinska who write and commission detailed reports on each, before making a single recommendation to the Nobel Assembly, consisting of 50 out of the Karolinska's 150 professors. The whole process is exhaustive and obsessively secret. Even though the recommendation was decided before the end of last week, no hints emerge beforehand.

The fame of winning a Nobel prize stays with scientists for the rest of their career – often longer than the financial reward that goes with it.

Sir Aaron Klug, director of the Laboratory of Molecular Medicine at Cambridge and joint Nobel chemistry prize winner in 1982, said the prize is the greatest accolade scientists can receive from their peers. "Other than that, it didn't change my life all that much." He said his prize of about £80,000 paid for "a new bicycle, among other things".

Sir John Vane, the pharmacologist at the William Harvey Research Institute in London, won his medicine Nobel in 1982 for his work on prostaglandins, natural chemicals in the body involved in pain response. Among the personal benefits of the prize, he said, is being able to get into restaurants "even if they are short of space". In addition, the prize raises the public's awareness of scientific achievements although a drawback is that "for every Nobel prize winner there are dozens of losers who should have got it in other fields".



Express delivery: A fitter working in Burton on Trent, Staffordshire, on a driving wheel – the initial stage of building the first main-line express steam locomotive for 35 years. The train, 'Tornado', will be completed by 1998 at Darlington and will operate passenger charter services between London and Edinburgh. Photograph: Roger Gamber

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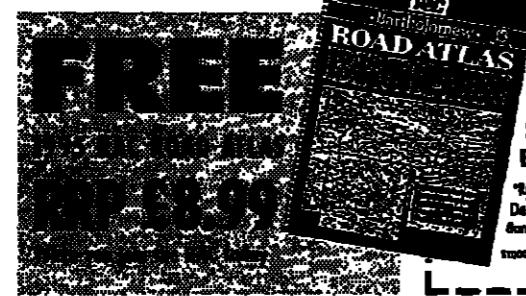
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School standards 'put at risk by price war'

FRAN ABRAMS
and JUDITH JUDD

A price war has broken out between rival groups of private and public sector secondary school inspections, forcing down fees to a point where both sides say quality is being threatened.

Private firms which now bid for contracts against local authorities and universities say they may be forced to pull out because they can no longer make a profit and maintain standards.

Local authority teams now account for about 45 per cent of all secondary inspections compared with 78 per cent in 1993, with the rest being covered by private operators.

However, some private operators say they may have to pull out of inspections if the price war continues. Others are happy to make a loss on inspections because they raise their credibility in the education world.

The Government introduced four-yearly privatised inspections three years ago under the supervision of the Office for Standards in Education, Ofsted. While officials are struggling to find enough inspectors for the 21,000 primary schools, the market for secondary school inspections is buoyant, with as many as 14 operators competing to inspect some schools.

Local authority teams now account for about 45 per cent of all secondary inspections compared with 78 per cent in 1993, with the rest being covered by private operators.

Local authorities claim they have anecdotal evidence that some private inspectors have failed to spot bad schools. The average cost of a secondary school inspection is down from between £22,000 and £25,000 two years ago to between £16,500 and £17,500 today.

And groups with retired members of Her Majesty's Inspectors of schools, now abolished, are able to charge lower prices than their rivals.

A few university departments which have lost teacher training work because of the Government's introduction of school-based training schemes are also entering the market.

Some local authority teams are using part of the money they make on primary inspection to subsidise secondary work. Unlike universities and private operators, they are legally bound to do inspections at no more or less than cost price.

Private operators are becoming increasingly frustrated because they cannot win contracts to inspect secondary schools at a price which allows them to do the job properly.

Neil McIntosh, chief executive of CBT Education Services of Reading, one of the biggest private operators, said its policy of maintaining proper training and quality control programmes cost money. "I don't believe that it is possible for organisations, whether public or private, to make a reasonable margin on conducting secondary inspections at the current prices."

Alan Parker, education officer for the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, said: "We have anecdotal evidence that private inspectors are failing to identify schools that the local authority knows are at risk."

But Ofsted dismissed the idea that the rigour of inspections was threatened. "We monitor quality very carefully so teams have to maintain it if they are to continue getting work."

Half of workforce 'depressed by stress'

Half the country's workforce are depressed because they feel they are under increased stress in their jobs, a survey is to reveal today.

One in three people are working longer hours than they want to and half are not getting overtime pay for their extra hours, the survey says.

The study by the pollster NOP for Granada TV's *World in Action* says that the stress caused by an increase in hours and the fear of unemployment are costing the country billions of pounds a year.

Professor Cary Cooper, an occupational psychologist, says on the programme, broadcast tonight: "It is a time bomb in our society and we are going to pay the cost."

Professor Cooper was the author of a booklet on stress controversially axed by the Department of Health this week. The department said recent research disputed the link between heart attacks and longer working hours.

Professor Cooper, from the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology, says on the programme that the stress problem is moving from the shop floor into white collar professions.

"The bill last year to the UK economy was £11bn due to sickness absence alone, of which we'll say conservatively that a third is stress related," he says.

The survey, of 1,003 full-time workers, says that 63 per cent felt they were under more stress at work than five years ago. As a result 44 per cent said they had trouble sleeping, 26 per cent drank more because of work and 22 per cent smoked more.

Sixty per cent said they were exhausted at the end of the working day and 56 per cent said they did not have enough time for family or personal relationships.

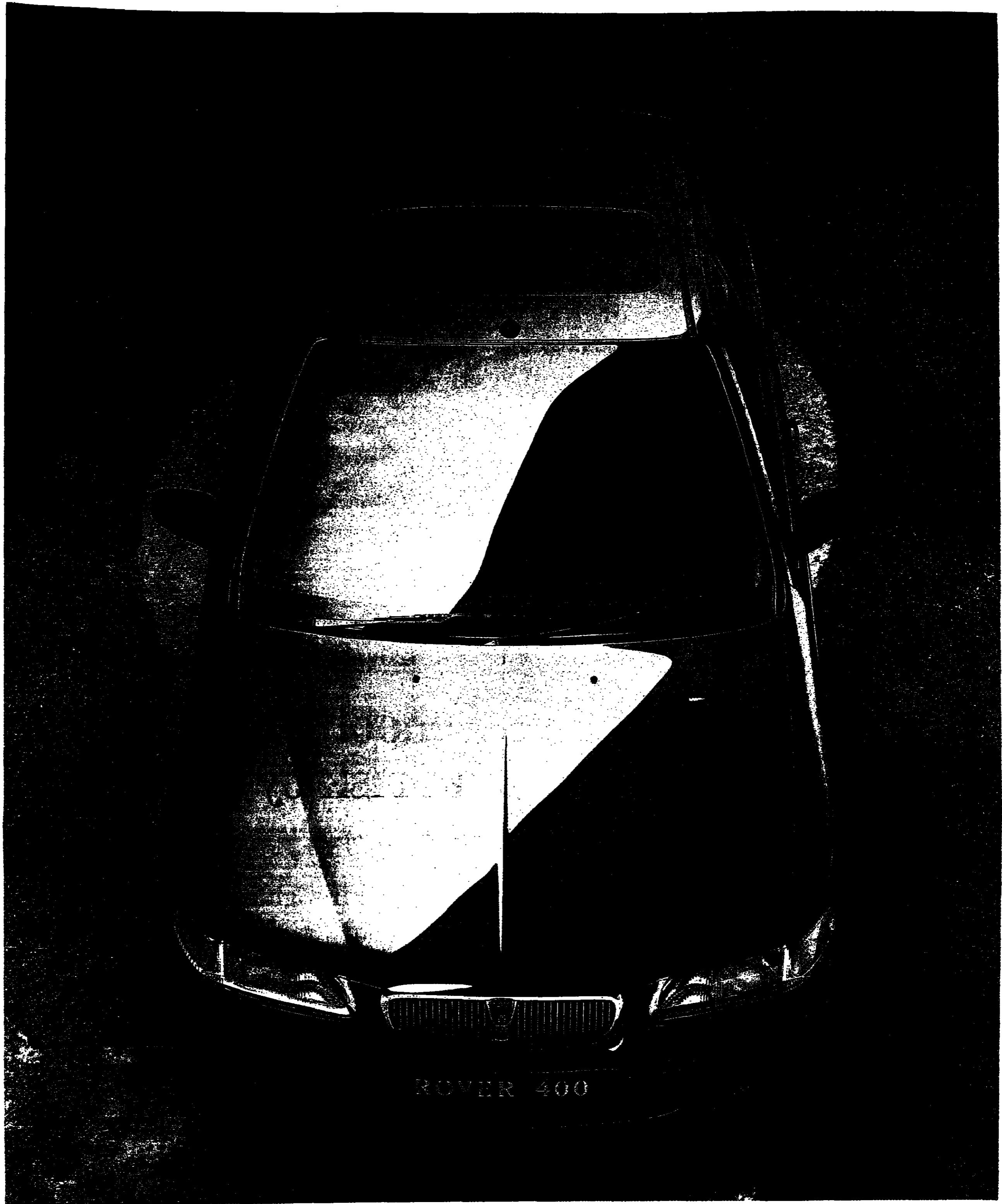
Almost a third expected the stress level to rise in the next two years, while 58 per cent said fear of losing their jobs was the reason for working harder.

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news

Top lawyer offers to work three days a year for free

STEPHEN WARD
Legal Affairs Correspondent

Stung by Tony Blair's plea to lawyers to serve society by working unpaid, one of the highest-paid QC's is promising to give three days a year free.

Peter Goldsmith QC, who was estimated in a survey

among the profession to earn

between £75,000 and £1m a

year, called on his highly-paid

colleagues to follow his example.

He said he was open to offers for the best use of his

three days, which work out at

about £3,500 each.

His suggestion was a re-

sponse to a call from the

Labour leader, a qualified bar-

rister, at last week's conference

in Brighton. Tony Blair's wife,

Cherie Booth QC, already does

some *pro bono* work and the

Labour front-bench spokesman

Paul Boateng, a qualified bar-

rister and solicitor, also gives

some of his time free.

Mr Goldsmith said *pro bono*

work should not be a substitute

for adequate legal aid, adding

that many barristers and solic-

itors already worked for free.

Mr Goldsmith, a commercial law expert, made the offer during a debate at the solicitors' annual conference in Birmingham over the weekend. He suggested that even civil law specialists could do useful work by fighting complex test cases where the litigant could not otherwise afford to go to court, or giving free counsel's opinions.

The conference was told that a few hundred solicitors may be earning less than £10,000 a year. Most of those on low salaries are high street solicitors working alone, who are still relying on conveyancing work, where prices have been squeezed by the property recession and competition from licensed conveyancers.

The Law Society's new president, Martin Mears, is trying to find ways to enforce fixed conveyancing fees at a higher level and to restrict numbers entering the profession to reduce competition.

The Law Society's research and policy adviser, John Jenkins, revealed the findings of a

survey of 500 firms' earnings in 1993-94. The sample suggests up to 800 out of 70,000 solicitors are earning less than £10,000.

The bigger the firm, the better the salaries. For 2- to 4-partner firms, the worst-paid 25 per cent averaged £24,000 a year; for 11- to 25-partner firms the average among the bottom 25 per cent was £51,000.

Last week Lord Woolf, a Law Lord, criticised young specialist barristers who earn more than his own £109,000 a year salary. He reinforced his message during the debate in Birmingham saying: "I was saying it was in their own, the profession's and justice's long-term interests only to charge reasonable fees. The same is true of the solicitor's side of the profession."

The Bar hit back this weekend. Young barristers doing criminal legal aid work often earned as little as £15,000 a year in their early years, it said.

"If you want somebody to fix your washing machine, the call out fee works out at £74 for the first hour," Mr Goldsmith said.

Reservoir dregs pose threat to Lakeland



Free offer: If there are no takers for Kentmere Reservoir in Cumbria it may have to be breached

Photograph: Craig Easton

CLARE GARNER

A water-tight bargain that will put paid to worries about droughts, hosepipe bans and bathing restrictions, has come on the market.

A 225-million-gallon reservoir in the Lake District is seeking a new proprietor. The current owner of the Kentmere reservoir in Cumbria is offering to hand over the reservoir for free to new owners because it no longer needs the water supply for its papermaking business.

In return for picking up the £100,000 repair bill and annual maintenance costs of between £2,500 and £3,000, the new owner could enjoy the contents of the reservoir, namely water.

Due to modern recycling technology, James Cropper, of Burneside, Cumbria, no longer has any manufacturing requirement for the reservoir it has owned for the last 150 years.

A spokeswoman for the NRA said: "We investigated whether the Kentmere reservoir would be of use to pollution control, flooding, fisheries, water resources or recreation. We concluded that the cost of maintaining the reservoir would outweigh any

benefits that we could get financially."

"When someone owns a reservoir the responsibility for maintenance lies with them. We simply can't do it. We have to work to taxpayers' demands."

Dismayed at the news, Mr Cropper said: "The NRA hasn't confirmed this to me in writing but it sounds to me like it would welcome the reservoir being breached. Any empty reservoir is not a pretty sight."

Until recently locals and visitors walked around the lonely shores, enjoying the reflection of the horseshoe of fells in the sparkling water. The route was particularly popular with people who did not dare go on the high fells. Now they are greeted by a scene of desolation, a blot on the beautiful Lake District landscape.

Ian Brodie, secretary of Friends of the Lake District, said: "Mr Cropper's company is obviously a successful one. It would be nice to see it maintaining important landscape features on the land that it owns. This reservoir is part of the industrial archaeology of the area and if it is left empty obviously it will drastically alter the landscape."

Firefighters to extend strikes

BARRIE CLEMENT
Labour Editor

Firefighters' leaders on Merseyside are today expected to order an escalation of industrial action in a dispute that is increasingly seen as a test case for the service throughout Britain.

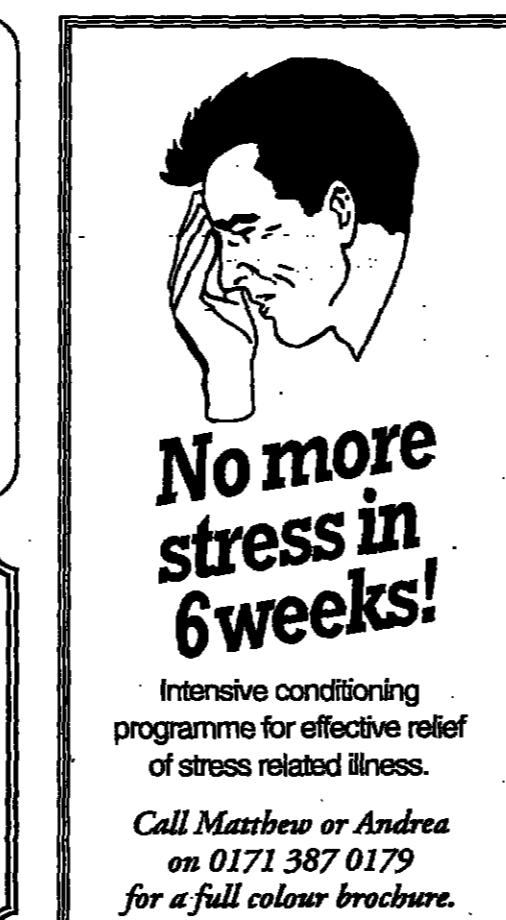
Leaders of the Fire Brigades Union yesterday expressed confidence that their 1,700 members in the North-west were voting "overwhelmingly" to escalate 9-hour strikes to 24 hours in protest at job cuts.

The union has pencilled in Tuesday next week for the first day-long walk-out and has warned that the wording of the ballot could allow 48-hour stoppages, with each firefighter

striking for 24 hours over two days. The Merseyside firefighters have already staged six strikes, including a stoppage last Saturday, in protest at the threatened loss of 20 jobs and three days' annual leave.

Ken Cameron, general secretary of the FBU, predicted a "massive" majority in favour of tougher action in the ballot result due today. "Let's hope when management sees the vote it will concentrate their minds and produce some commonsense."

He said every fire authority had supplied management with two-page version of the extensive KPMG study, to which the authority had responded in a seven-page document. However, the union had refused to supply the whole document.



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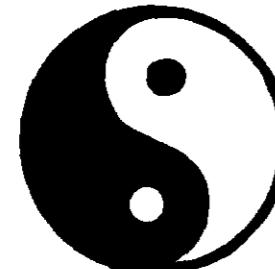
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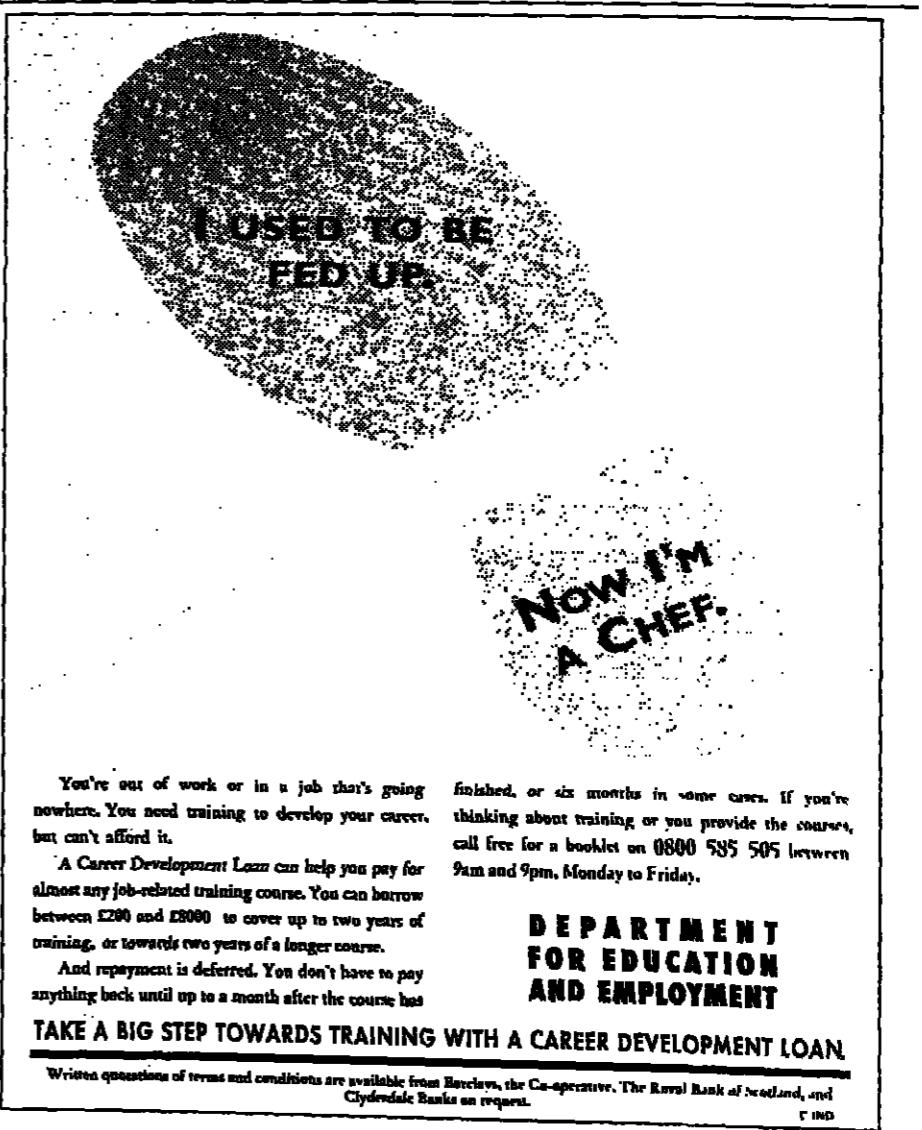
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international

Balkans conflict: On the eve of the ceasefire, Sarajevo almost relaxes but Bosnia's armies still strive for last-gasp gains



Three Muslim Sarajevo men enjoying yesterday's sunny weather near the city's destroyed library

Photograph: Danilo Krstanovic/Reuters

A Sunday stroll in besieged city that waits for peace

EMMA DALY
Sarajevo

A Sunday afternoon stroll through the warm autumn sunshine is a rare pleasure come only lately to the people of Sarajevo, accustomed for so long to venturing out knowing that every trip out could be their last. Most of those walking the streets yesterday did so from need - buses are rare, the tram-line is limited and petrol is expensive - but they were able to enjoy peace and quiet.

"It's lovely, everything is better. But look where we are standing: a sniper could shoot at any time," said Almira Kovacevic, a young blonde with huge dark glasses, pointing at the rusting, bullet-ridden wreck of an articulated lorry parked at a junction, protection of a kind from the gunmen 500 yards away across the front line.

"The situation is much bet-

ter, but there is also an air of uncertainty that is killing people here. We can walk safely along the streets, but we are still imprisoned. I can walk from Bascica but only to the edge of Nedzaric," she said. The outer limits of her world stretch from the Old Town, some 10 miles west towards the Serb-held suburb beside the airport.

Her companion, Nedzad Musovic, armed with the essential Sarajevo accessory, a modified shopping trolley to haul water, wood and other supplies, is pessimistic about the ceasefire brokered by the US envoy, Richard Holbrooke, due to start at midnight. "It's a nice idea, but tough to make real."

If all goes well, water, gas and electricity should flow in tonight, and the guns quieten. Citizens classify themselves as optimists or pessimists, a fairly even split, it seems but almost everyone sees the future as a glass half-empty. The good life does not exist, only that which gets less bad.

"There's no shooting now but we still don't have water, gas and electricity," said Minka, who lives with her husband and two daughters in a pock-marked flat overlooking Heroes' Square, one of the most dangerous places in Sarajevo. "The blue routes are open so there is a lot of food but it doesn't mean anything to us because we are split, it seems but almost everyone sees the future as a glass half-empty. The good life does not exist, only that which gets less bad.

"It is not enough for Minka,

but Alisa and her friend Maja,

a Serb forced to flee the suburb of Grbavica, 20 miles away,

are easier to please; perhaps

they need to believe, "It's time

for the war to end. I can walk

normally in the streets - but I'm

still not safe, I still feel afraid,"

Alisa said. "Everything will be

resolved over time."

The family moved out of

their own flat - or rather, out

of the tiny front room they ate,

drank and slept in for three

years, the other rooms barri-

caded against Serb shells and

bullets fired from the line across

the street - two months ago and

in to a flat in the adjoining block.

"It could so easily be like last

year - a few months of cease-

fire and then it all starts up

again," she said. "This is not

peace, nor freedom. The Serbs

are still only 15 miles from my

house, and as long as they re-

main, there will be no peace."

"Freedom will come from the

political negotiations," inter-

jected her husband, Midhad, his

spirits invigorated by a glass or

two of lizza. "And until then, so

what?" said Minka crossly. "It

will never be as bad as it was in

'92 and '93, but I've lived the

same way since the first day of

the war," she said. "Crude as

it is, it is still better than

nothing."

"It is due to begin at midnight

- if electricity and gas supplies

are restored to Sarajevo by

then, the UN and aid agencies

are making frantic efforts to

meet the deadline despite

initial recalcitrance from the

warring factions and a row over

an unpaid gas bill.

French peace-keepers yes-

terday supervised a three-way

mine-clearing party of Serbs,

Croats and Bosnian troops,

who removed explosives from a

front-line area to allow engi-

neers to start repairing pylons

and electric lines. "We hope by

dark tomorrow it can be com-

pleted," said a UN official.

Gas is unlikely to reach the

city until tomorrow - if all goes

well at a meeting in Moscow to-

day between Bosnian officials

and the Russian gas company,

owed \$100m (£67m) for sup-

plies since the war began. En-

gineers from the British

Overseas Development Ad-

ministration (ODA), who are

expecting to work non-stop

once the Russians give the

green light, say the system could

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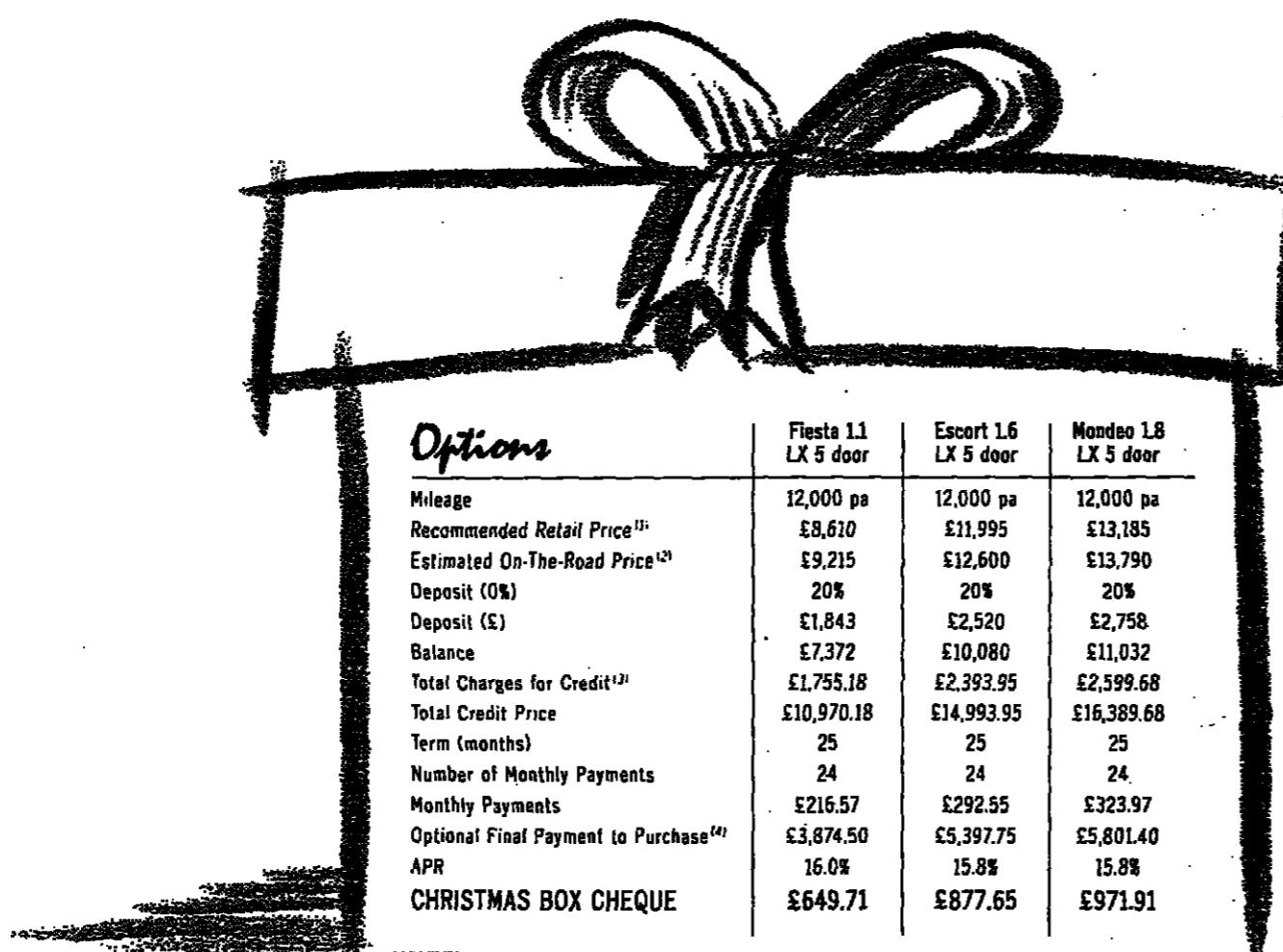
the deadline because we would

work all tomorrow night and the

gas would be into the city on

Tuesday."

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Six killed in last-minute Serb shelling

Sarajevo - As Bosnia's armies fought for last-minute gains before a ceasefire due to take effect at midnight, six civilians were killed and more than 30 wounded, many of them children, by a cluster bomb fired at a refugee camp near the government-held town of Tuzla, in what appeared to be Bosnian Serb revenge for recent battlefield losses, writes Emma Daly. The UN air base at Tuzla was also shelled, bringing the risk of retaliatory air strikes.

The first shell, armed with a cluster bomb filled with shrapnel, hit the refugee centre in Zivinice, south of Tuzla, as children were playing outside in the sunshine.

A local doctor, Duska Bericovic, said 20 children were among more than 30 wounded, and many were in "extremely serious" condition.

Bosnian television, whose cameras arrived only minutes after the attack in Zivinice, showed several of the two dozen injured children awaiting treatment. They said four children and two women were killed in the attack.

Two minutes later, a shell hit the air base without causing any damage; the refugee centre and the air base were hit again in the early afternoon, but there were no further casualties.

Although Tuzla is a UN-declared "safe area", peace-keeping officials said they could not determine whether Zivinice lay within the protected zone. But the UN was "considering a range of responses" to the attack on the peace-keepers. "There have been phone calls made between the UN and Nato," an official said, implying air strikes were an option. The Croatian state news agency said Serb planes also dropped cluster bombs on villages in the Croat-held Una River valley in northern Bosnia, causing dozens of civilian casualties.

The attacks came as the Bosnian Army and its Croatian

allies increased the pressure on front lines in north and central Bosnia, reporting gains near the Serb-held town of Doboj. Heavy fighting was reported along the line between the contested town of Otoka, close to the Croatian border, and Kije, which fell to the Bosnian Army last month. "We shall see the results this evening and tomorrow," said Brigadier Mirsad Selmanovic, second in command of the Bosnian Fifth Corps, amid speculation that the government was seeking to improve its position before the truce takes effect.

It is due to begin at midnight - if electricity and gas supplies are restored to Sarajevo by then. The UN and aid agencies are making frantic efforts to meet the deadline despite initial recalcitrance from the warring factions and a row over an unpaid gas bill.

French peace-keepers yesterday supervised a three-way mine-clearing party of Serbs, Croats and Bosnian troops, who removed explosives from a front-line area to allow engineers to start repairing pylons and electric lines. "We hope by dark tomorrow it can be completed," said a UN official.

Gas is unlikely to reach the city until tomorrow - if all goes well at a meeting in Moscow today between Bosnian officials and the Russian gas company, which owed \$100m (£67m) for supplies since the war began. Engineers from the British Overseas Development Administration (ODA), who are expecting to work non-stop once the Russians give the green light, say the system could be running a day. "The process can be compressed because of the urgency," said Tony James of the ODA. "You may be talking about 10 or 12 hours to the outskirts of Sarajevo. We'd miss the deadline because we would work all tomorrow night and the gas would be into the city on Tuesday."

international

Stroll
city tha
r peace

JONATHAN CLAYTON

Reuter

Washington - Nato is reeling from fresh allegations of corruption against its Belgian Secretary-General, Willy Claes.

Just as the alliance enters one of the most critical periods in its history, the completion of planning for a Bosnian peace implementation force, furious speculation has again broken out over Claes's political future. Nato diplomats are worried

that his presence may weaken the alliance, and are questioning how long he can hang on. "It is terribly debilitating. At a time like this, his concentration on the job 100 per cent, he can't disappear into private meetings with lawyers," one diplomat.

The issue of Mr Claes's involvement in a bribery scandal, which dogged him for several weeks earlier this year, pushed its way back to centre-stage on Friday after the Belgian media

reported that the country's highest constitutional court had recommended to parliament that he face charges on corruption and fraud.

More bad news could come his way today, when the Belgian court's report is discussed by a special parliamentary commission. The 11-strong panel will decide on procedure on Tuesday. In Belgium politicians can only be investigated with the approval of parliament, which has the right to indict ministers

and bring them before the constitutional court.

Nato sources say that all of Mr Claes's attention should be focused on organising the biggest and most dangerous ground operation ever launched by the military alliance, rather than on newspaper headlines.

The allegations against Mr Claes centre around a bribery scandal, involving the Italian helicopter company Agusta when he was economics minister in 1983, an incident which has con-

vulsed Belgian politics for the past two years. Four Belgian ministers have resigned since 1984 following accusations of kickbacks paid by Agusta to Mr Claes's Flemish socialist party.

So far, there is no suggestion that Mr Claes himself received any money and he has always denied any wrongdoing.

A clearly shaken Mr Claes said on Friday that he planned to carry on as head of the Atlantic alliance. "I am totally innocent. I have never done

anything wrong," he told a news conference following a meeting of Nato defence ministers in the US colonial town of Williamsburg to agree details of the Bosnian force.

The incident overshadowed

the success of the meeting and independent analysts once again underlined the difficulty Mr Claes faces in trying to battle on. "It is simply cannot go on, it is no longer a question of his guilt or innocence, but of the damage it is doing to the alliance,"

said a senior Nato diplomat.

On Saturday, while Claes travelled to Toronto to give a speech on the alliance's future, Belgium's press clamoured for his head. "If he is concerned about Nato's image... he resigns voluntarily now," wrote one columnist in *De Gaze van Antwerpen*, a Flemish daily.

Nato sources say Claes may be helped by the fact that member states do not want a vacancy at the top of the alliance at such a critical time.

IN BRIEF

Spy chief mystery

Johannesburg — Muizwenda Mduli, the South African spy chief, found shot dead in mysterious circumstances, had been investigating the possible involvement of fellow-agents in the failed coup in the Comoro Islands, a South African newspaper claimed. The National Intelligence Agency (NIA) security chief was found dead in his car last week with bullet wound in his head.

The *Sunday Independent* quoted an NIA director as saying the agency believed Mduli had been killed after making a breakthrough in an investigation into a possible agency role in the coup, led by the French mercenary Bob Denard. French troops crushed the coup last week.

First release

Jerusalem — Bashayer Ali Abu Laben, 18, became the first of more than 5,000 Palestinian prisoners held by Israel to be released under the new Israel-PLO autonomy accord. Twenty other women prisoners scheduled to be released refused to leave in protest at Israel's refusal to free four women accused of murder.

AP

Race still an issue

Baltimore — Pope John Paul II touched on a central issue of US life, telling Americans that racial equality was as much an issue now as it was when they fought a civil war over slavery a century ago. On the last day of his five-day tour, the Pope told the country's races they had to live in harmony to be true to the ideals of the nation's Founding Fathers.

Reuter

Record Mao sale

Peking — An oil painting of Mao fetched a record 6.05 million yuan (\$461,330) at auction over the weekend. The painting depicts Mao in his late 20s during a trip to the coal mining town of Anyuan, rallying miners to stage a strike. A copy of the first issue of the *People's Daily*, published on June 15, 1949, sold for 3,580 yuan.

Reuter

Gourmet threat

New Delhi — A growing appetite among East Asian gourmets for swiftlet nests was driving the bird to extinction in India, wildlife experts say. The trade in the nests, which swiftlets build using their saliva, moss and leaves, disturbed the birds during the breeding season on the Andaman and Nicobar islands on India's south-east coast.

Reuter



Surveying the wreckage: A mosque damaged after an earthquake measuring seven on the Richter scale hit Sungaiipenuh in central Sumatra, Indonesia, killing 100 people and seriously injuring another 700. Police joined 800 soldiers to pull bodies from rubble. Photograph: AFP

Carey attacks Sudan's treatment of Christians

ALFRED TABAN

Reuters

Juba, Sudan — Thousands of Christians in Sudan's war-torn south gave a tumultuous welcome yesterday to the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Rt Rev George Carey.

Crowds in the government-held town of Juba lined the

street from the airport to the Anglican cathedral, where Dr Carey held a service outside the compound for 50,000 people.

He called on both the strongly Islamic government and the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) to seek peace. Hundreds of thousands of people have died in the civil war between the mostly Islamic Arab

north and the Christian and animist south since 1983.

Dr Carey, spiritual leader of the world's 70 million Anglicans, told the congregation, "You are not forgotten". While holding an open air service in the capital, Khartoum, he criticised the treatment of Christians in Sudan, saying he was aware they were not enjoying their full

rights, such as the right of worship. In Juba, he said: "We know of all your suffering in Sudan. We know that the war has divided you and displaced hundreds of thousands". Many people did not know where their loved ones were, he added.

Dr Carey made a controversial visit to rebel-held areas of southern Sudan in December 1993, when he omitted Khartoum from his itinerary.

In response the military ruler, Lieutenant-General Omar Hassan al-Bashir, expelled the British ambassador and Britain in turn ordered out the Sudanese ambassador.

The archbishop's visit to Khartoum could signal an improvement in relations.

Polish satirist has the last laugh

It may be over six years since he lost his job as spokesman of Poland's last Communist government, but Jerzy Urban shows no sign of losing his legendary sense of humour.

Last Wednesday marked the fifth anniversary of the launch of the bitingly satirical *Nie* magazine and, as its founder and driving force, Mr Urban decided to throw a lavish ball to celebrate.

Guests who included the man who declared martial law in Poland in 1981, General Wojciech Jaruzelski, and several current ministers, were asked to turn up in something evoking the spirit of the old Communist times. Several drove to the event in a cavalcade of vintage socialist-era cars. Others brought their ration books and rolls of toilet paper, a reminder of when even such basic commodities were in short supply.

Mr Urban, one of the key figures in the administration responsible for getting Poland into such an economic mess, beamed throughout. He had genuine cause for celebration. Much to his own initial surprise, *Nie*, Poland's no-holds-barred answer to *Private Eye*, has proved a phenomenal success, with a weekly circulation now standing at over 700,000.

For someone whose loyalty to the old Communist regime was unswerving, Mr Urban has negotiated the treacherous waters of capitalism with consummate skill. Last year, he personally saw a pre-tax profit of over £1.6m. "I enjoy being rich and I enjoy being independent,"

says Mr Urban. "But I am essentially a political animal and I miss not being directly involved in government."

When Mr Urban was appointed government spokesman in mid-1981, Poland was in crisis. The Solidarity trade union, formed a year earlier, was pressing for democratic reforms and threatening to bring the country to its knees through strikes. Mr Urban firmly approved of the December 1981 imposition of martial law under which Solidarity was banned and many of its leaders imprisoned. Even when martial law was lifted in 1983, Mr Urban remained one of Solidarity's most acerbic critics, frequently using his weekly televised press conferences to pour scorn on the union and its leader, Lech Walesa.

Mr Urban's quick wit set him apart from nearly all of his Communist peers and certainly made his press conferences interesting. Millions of Poles turned to watch, but although they often laughed, many found his brutal style offensive.

With the end fast approaching, Mr Urban represented the government in the "Round Table" talks with Solidarity in 1989 that paved the way to the country's first partially-free elections for over 40 years. He stood for parliament in the

June poll that followed, but, like all his colleagues, was crushed in the landslide victory for Solidarity. A little over one year later, he watched in horror as the man he loved to ridicule, Lech Walesa, won the presidency.

For Mr Urban, there did not appear to be too much left to laugh about. But with his political career effectively over, he decided to return to his original calling — journalism — and launch a satirical new weekly which would pour scorn on the country's new leaders.

The first edition of *Nie* (translated as "No") rolled off the presses in October 1990. It was like nothing ever seen in Poland before. Its language was coarse and colourful; its cartoons and pictures innovative and often sexually explicit and its mockery of President Walesa was relentless.

"Ours was the only paper that conveyed the sense of disappointment many felt in the new authorities and exposed the new cases of corruption," Mr Urban says. "It also coincided with fatigue for the sort of political debate that had been raging for the previous 10 years. People wanted their politics in a more simplified form. And they wanted some humour."

There is an obvious irony in the fact that the former Com-

munist Party mouthpiece lost no time in making full use of Poland's new-found press freedoms. *Nie*'s relentless lampooning of the politicians of the right, moreover, undoubtedly helped pave the way for the dramatic success of the reformed communist Democratic Left Alliance (SLD), which swept back to power in Poland's 1993 parliamentary elections.

The paper is also quite clearly supporting the SLD leader, Aleksander Kwasniewski, in his bid to topple Mr Walesa in next month's presidential election.

Mr Urban, still only 39, is probably too tainted with the brush of the old regime ever to be eligible for political office again. But as our interview comes to an end, the phone goes. It is Mr Kwasniewski.

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Album of the Week.

Simply Red's new album, *Life*, is simply brilliant.

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international

oil rights: The fight to control the flow from Azerbaijan has revived Cold War tensions, but a compromise is set to be agreed today



Deal of the century: The Azeri capital of Baku, where the Azerbaijan International Operating Company will decide the fate of huge oil reserves
Photograph: AP

Russia fights for pipeline deal

PHIL REEVES
Moscow

A consortium of international oil giants helping to develop Azerbaijan's huge Caspian Sea reserves will today announce how the first flow of oil will be conveyed to Western markets, closing the first chapter in a battering process that has revived some of the frostier emotions of the Cold War.

Meeting in the Azeri capital of Baku, the Azerbaijan International Operating Company (AIOC), which includes British Petroleum, is widely expected to reveal that it will use two pipelines - a compromise solution which will do little to ease the international tensions that have built up around what is widely billed as the "deal of the century".

The future of Azerbaijan's huge oil reserves, which some observers believe could turn the former Soviet republic into another Kuwait, is an issue in which money and politics are both at stake on a grand scale.

The Russians have long lobbied for the oil - from three fields capable of eventually yielding 700,000 barrels a day - to be pumped across their territory from Baku to the Black Sea port of Novorossiysk through a pipeline system which is largely in place.

This would supply Moscow with many millions of dollars of much-needed tariffs, although Russia has offered discounts in an effort to get the contract. For more importantly, it would allow the Kremlin both to reassert influence over its former territory and exert control over what may become one of the most important oil supply lines to the West.

Russian leaders play down concerns over the fact that the pipeline runs through war-ravaged Chechnya, although it helps explain Moscow's speedy move to crush the breakaway republic's bid for independence.

The Americans and the Turks feel equally strongly about the issue. They have pressed hard for the consortium, which is in-

vesting \$8bn (£5bn) in the project, to include a southern route, thus ensuring that Azerbaijan does not again fall under Russian dominance. Washington, in particular, does not want to see the Russians use their pipeline as a bargaining chip in other strategic wrangles.

At the end of last week, reliable leaks emerged confirming the consortium's compromise: "Early oil" would be split between the Russian route - which would get about 2.5 million barrels a year - and a pipeline to Supsa in Georgia, from where the oil would go on to northern Turkish ports.

The Russians were not pleased. "We are disappointed at the apparent level of US influence over the decision," said a spokesman for the Caspian Pipeline Project, a three-nation conglomerate which is building the Russian pipeline system.

The negotiating process has been fraught with behind-the-scenes politicking. Heydar Aliyev, president of Azerbaijan

has a poor human rights record and a doubtful curriculum vitae, which includes membership of the Soviet Politburo under Brezhnev and a stint as a senior KGB officer.

Yet last week the ageing president - whose state oil company, Socar, has a 10 per cent stake in the consortium - found himself playing Juliet to several of the most powerful Romneys on the planet.

President Bill Clinton spent 35 minutes talking to him by telephone from Washington. A Russian delegation arrived with a long list of helpful proposals, including assistance with a metro system, health care and cross border co-operation - a marked change from their attitude last December when Russia closed its border with Azerbaijan, claiming it was a possible arms route for Chechen rebels.

Nor have the Georgians sat quietly by. They too have been pushing their case hard - so much so that some within the country believe the Russians

angered by the rivalry, may have been behind one of the more sinister episodes in the former Soviet republic's recent history - the attempted assassination of their leader, Eduard Shevardnadze, on 29 August. The Georgian Prosecutor-General has issued a warrant for the arrest of Georgia's former head of security, Igor Giorgadze, a former KGB officer who was widely believed to be a puppet of Moscow.

Last week a delegation of senior Georgian officials were in the Russian capital, where they say Mr Giorgadze is in hiding in an effort to publicise his alleged crime.

Although they have yet to produce hard evidence, they believe it is possible that the assassination attempt was a Russian-inspired warning shot intended to deter Mr Shevardnadze from pushing too enthusiastically for the pipeline. "It is one theory that we cannot discount," a source close to the Georgian government told the *Independent*.



Central Asian oil finds fuel Iran's isolation

MICHAEL SHERIDAN
Diplomatic Editor

The struggle for influence over Central Asia's oil and gas reserves is much more than a contest for wealth and power among the countries of the region. The development of these resources will mark a fundamental shift in the 21st century away from western dependence on Gulf oil. It will diminish the importance of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf monarchies. It could also condemn Iran, the big loser, to isolation and economic collapse.

Only a few American strategic planners and politicians have been aware of these high stakes. One who has grasped the enormous implications is Senator Bob Dole. He recently voiced the hope that the United States could diversify its sources of energy and reduce its commitment to the volatile Middle East.

At the moment, statistics point to the continuing predominance of the Gulf in the oil market. The US consumes 26 per cent of global oil production. It produces only 8.6 million barrels per day (bpd) against a demand of 18 million bpd and will continue to depend on imports.

The Gulf countries provide about 27 per cent of world oil production. The name of the game, however, is not present production but future reserves. It is in this strategic sense that Central Asia could hold the key to a transformed map of global economics and security.

About 63 per cent of proven

world oil reserves are in the Gulf. Saudi Arabia alone sits atop 25 per cent, while Iraq holds 9.9 per cent and Iran 8.8 per cent. But if the resources of the Caspian Sea and Kazakhstan live up to their promise, an alternative set of sources could offset the Gulf's predominance. To take one example: some oil industry analysts believe the Tengiz field in Kazakhstan could hold as much as 10 billion barrels. In comparison, the North Sea Forties field held only 3 billion.

The politics of oil are therefore set to change. "Stable" and "pro-western" Gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia will continue to play a key role in supplying Asian markets. But the twin pariahs, Iran and Iraq, could find themselves pushed out in the cold under the US policy of "dual containment".

For Iran, the geopolitics look far worse. Since 1979 its economy has staggered under inflation, war and now a unilateral US trade embargo. It is pumping around 3 million bpd but cannot pay its bills.

The success of the US in its deliberate policy to cut Iran completely out of the Central Asian oil and gas pipeline plans is a significant blow to the Islamic republic. It is a dire warning that Tehran could one day find itself isolated from its markets. Any regime faced with these prospects would consider its options. Iran is spending scarce state funds on conventional arms to rebuild its army, navy and air force. If the US is to be believed, it is also developing a clandestine nuclear weapon.

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1. MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD, APPROVED STUDIES. 2. COA, 1994.

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international



Mean streets: A suspected victim of Mohajir terrorists lying dead in the Orangi area of Karachi

Photograph: AP

Japanese minister to resign over secret loan

RICHARD LLOYD PARRY

Tokyo

A bitter political dispute about the legal status of Japanese religious groups will claim a high-profile victim today when the Justice Minister, Tomomi Tazawa, resigns after allegations concerning a secret loan from a powerful Buddhist organisation.

The *Yomiuri Shimbun* newspaper reported on Friday that Mr Tazawa, a Liberal Democratic (LDP) member of the upper house of the Japanese Diet, had done a back-room deal with political opponents to avoid being questioned about the 20000 yen (21,250) loan from Riso Koseikai, a lay organisation which has links with the LDP. In return for dropping the questions, the Justice Minister allegedly promised members of Reform of Heisei, an upper house grouping which includes members of the opposition Shinshinto (New Frontier Party), that he would resist government

proposals to revise the Religious Corporation Law, which is being debated in the lower house of the Diet.

Mr Tazawa denied the charges on Friday, as an investigation was launched on the orders of the Prime Minister, Tomiichi Murayama. Over the weekend, however, it became clear that he could not survive. He will be replaced by Hiroshi Miyazawa, another LDP member of the upper house, and the brother of the former Prime Minister, Kiichi Miyazawa.

More than 180,000 religious groups are registered under the Religious Corporation Law, which grants them lucrative exemptions from income and property tax. The coalition government, in which Mr Tazawa's LDP is the leading partner, has been considering its revision for six months, since the sarin nerve gas attack on the Tokyo subway, universally attributed to the apocalyptic Aum Shinri Kyo cult, which became rich through property deals and donations.

But the proposed legislation has provoked strong opposition from Buddhist and Christian organisations, and has become the focus of a party political row.

The wealth and grass-roots influence acquired by Japan's religious groups also allow them to wield considerable power among voters. Shinshinto, which staged a landslide of defeat in the Diet in the next general election, has huge electorates, especially from its association with Jikka Gakai, a lay Buddhist organisation supported by 8 million families nationwide.

Many Shinshinto politicians view the proposed revisions to the law as an attack on their core supporters - hence their eagerness to enlist the sympathies of Mr Tazawa.

Despite denying allegations of a secret deal, Mr Tazawa admits the loan, which he has repaid in full. However, he broke Cabinet regulations which require ministers to disclose assets and loans.

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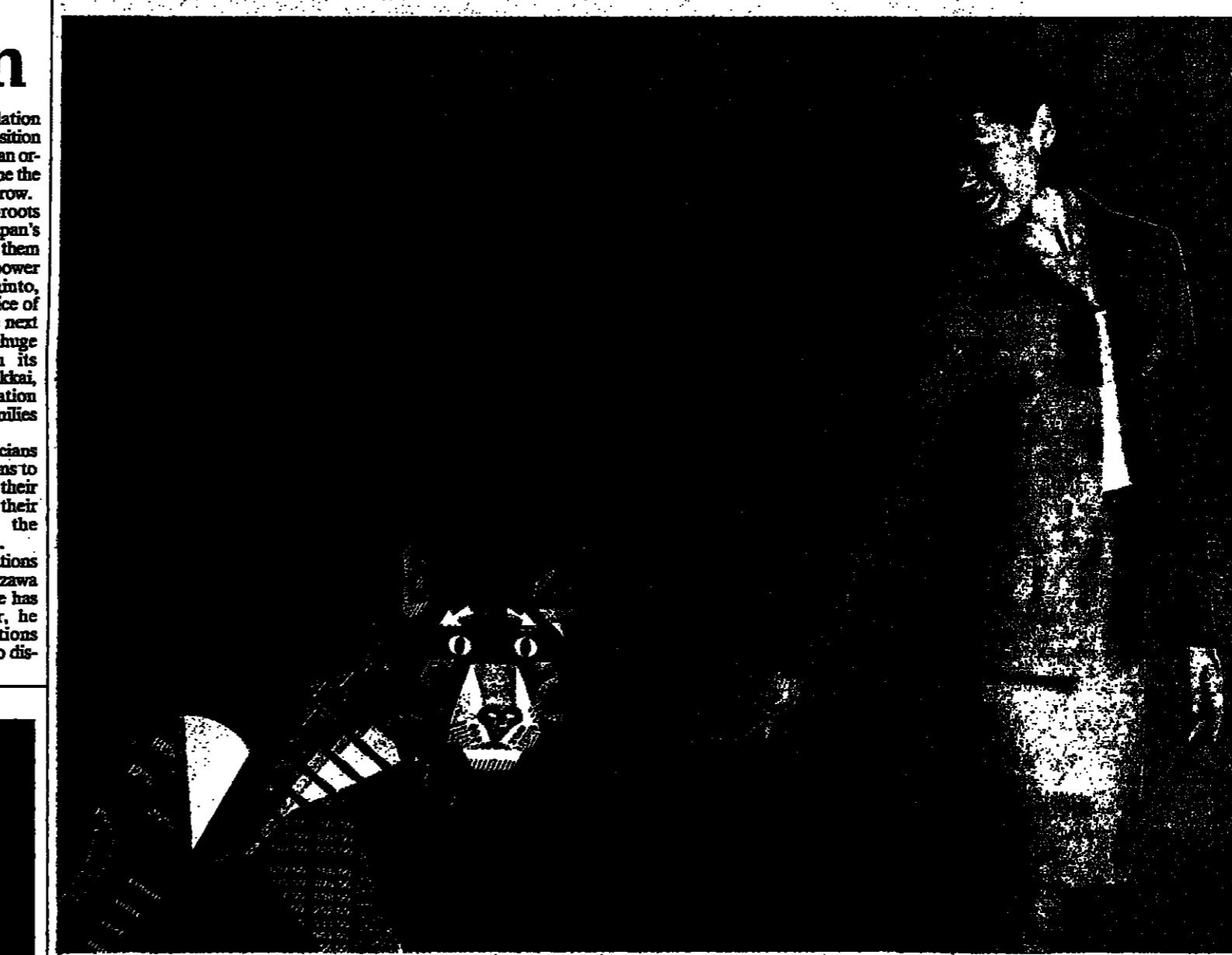


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obituaries/gazette

Sir Alan Wilson

Alan Wilson's long and active life can be divided into two parts: first as an academic scientist of great distinction, then in an industrial career at the top of two British companies - Courtaulds and Glaxo.

Wilson obtained a permanent place in the history of science as the first man to explain the difference between metals and insulators and thus give us our modern picture of the nature of semi-conductors. He carried out research into solid state physics, quantum theory and on the properties of metals, and wrote many influential books, including *The Theory of Metals* (1936), *Semi-Conductors and Metals* (1939) and *Thermodynamics and Statistical Mechanics* (1957).

Wilson was born on Merseyside in 1906 and won a scholarship from Wallacey Grammar School to Emmanuel College, Cambridge, at the age of 16. Studies in chemistry were followed by mathematics and then physics. Academic success,

all the Glaxo products sold today.

Finally, haunted by takeover bids, he saw Glaxo through a bitter wrangle involving Glaxo, Boots and Beecham. Buttressed by transparent intellectual honesty, Wilson's clear and reasoned exposition of the economic waste and damage to research brought about by that sort of financial engineering persuaded the Monopolies Commission to put a stop to the whole affair.

There was much more to Alan Wilson than this sequence suggests and it is not easy to classify the very wide range of activities which engaged him throughout his life. He had an exemplary record of public service which took him to the Iron and Steel Board, the Electricity Council, and the Committee on Noise, among many others. Pursuing a lifelong and passionate belief in the value of education, he played important parts in a number of educational bodies and a particular achievement in this area was the Industrial Fund for Education, with its aim to provide funds from industry for science laboratories in schools. Wilson's deep interest in Britain's history, traditions, education and craftsmanship is exemplified in his long and close association with the Goldsmiths' Company, where he served as Prince Warden in 1969-70.

Wilson had exceptional intellectual gifts with a mind of remarkable depth, clarity and powers of reasoning which often worked at such a pace that one could be forgiven for thinking that his conclusions were purely intuitive. They never were. He was modest to the extent of being self-effacing and this may have contributed to his fate of being often misunderstood and his achievements always underrated. But he saw more to life than material sciences, logic and mathematics. He had the widest of interests in art and literature and was at home in any field of human activity. His weakness stemmed from the difficulties he had, in spite of his high moral courage, in dealing adequately with the irrational and the mean and the pursuit of selfish interests and petty power politics in practical and business affairs.

In all his activities he had the unwavering support of his wife, Margaret, who died prematurely in 1961, and whose loss he felt very deeply.

Alan Wilson deserves honour as a scientist, industrialist and as a man of wide interest and finest personal qualities. The academic and industrial worlds still have a great need for men of this sort.

Paul Girolami

Alan Herries Wilson, scientist, industrialist: born Wallasey, Merseyside 2 July 1906; Fellow, Emmanuel College, Cambridge 1929-35; Fellow and Lecturer, Trinity College, Cambridge 1935-45; University Lecturer in Mathematics, Cambridge University 1933-45; FRS 1942; research director, Courtaulds 1945-54; managing director 1954-57; deputy chairman 1957-62; Kt 1961; director, International Computers Ltd 1962-72; chairman, Glaxo Group Ltd 1963-73; married 1934 Margaret Monks (died 1961; two sons); died 30 September 1995.

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Deaths

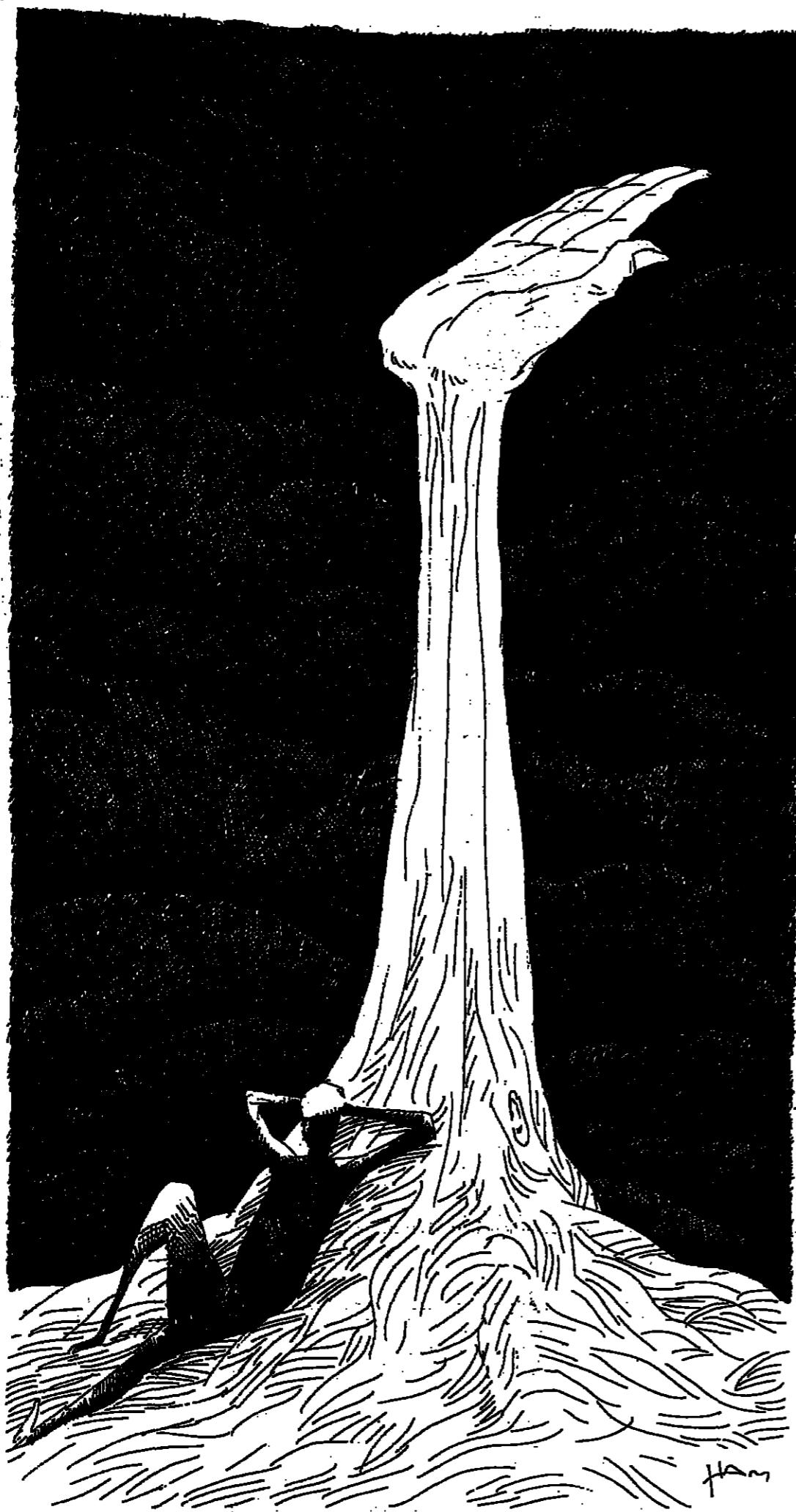
KENDAL: On 5 October 1995, after a heart attack, Dr Edith Lorna, aged 74 years, the Founding Head of the Department of Religious Studies at Canterbury Christ Church College. She is survived by her husband and friends, and by students and friends at Dunstan's Church, Canterbury, on Thursday 12 October at 4.30pm. Religious Eucharist at St Dunstan's on Friday 13 October at 3.30pm. Funeral Service of Thanksgiving in Canterbury Cathedral on Saturday 14 October, by tea at Christ Church Cathedral, to which all are invited. No flowers, please, but donations in her memory to the Kendal Memorial Fund, to assist overseas students at Canterbury Christ Church College, and may she rest in peace. **ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS:** The Duke of Edinburgh, President, World Wide Fund for Nature - WWF International, chairs a meeting of WWF Executive Committee at Buckingham Palace on 10 October. **ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS:** The Duke of Edinburgh, President, The National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London SE10; The Duke of York, a trustee, also attends. The Princess Royal, President, Save the Children Fund, attends a Private Appeal Dinner at the Royal Hospital Chelsea on 10 October. **ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS:** The Prince of Wales, President, the Headquarters of NCH Action for Children, Highgate Park, London N5. **Changing of the Guard:** The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment assumes the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am; F Company Scots Guards mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards Parade, 11.30am, provided by the Gloucester Guards.

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: Robert de Sorbo, founder of the Sorbonne, in Paris, 1201; Jean-Baptiste Regnault, painter, 1754; Charles-Camille Saint-Saëns, composer, 1835; Reynaldo Hahn, 1878.

The shirts have changed colour, the rites have been altered, but the word still fits. A warning by Felipe Fernandez-Armesto

Fascism is with us, if only we will see it



"It's really fascist to say, 'I love you,'" says a character in the cult film *Barcelona*. You can see what she means. A declaration of love is an attempt to control. It ties bonds of obligation. It snaps emotional snare. It represents a claim to authority over the body of the beloved – the power of the slave-driver and tyrant throughout the ages.

The audience, of course, is meant to laugh the line off as a wobbly fibby abuse of language, typical of the sloppiness which dilutes political rhetoric. In the lexicon of the left, from the 1920s to the 1980s, "Fascist" was a graffiti sprayed indiscriminately over any opponent. The effect was to make the accusation unconvincing and to let the real fascists off. Now we have gone to the other extreme. We use the word so guardedly and with so many qualifications that almost any potential Duce or Führer can claim exemption, no matter how far to the right, how bloodied with violence or how twisted with hate.

The time for fastidiousness is over. We have to be frank in identifying fascism, wherever it rises to the surface, at the first flush of its fins – because, just as you thought the world was safe for democracy, fascism is flexing its jaws offshore.

Academic experts have reclaimed "fascism" as the name of a syndrome of features common to specific European political movements in the period between the First and Second World Wars. Yet even the movement's defining characteristics were hard to specify. It had an opportunist's adaptability, a quick-silver slipperiness, a politico's unwillingness to be precise. "There are too many programmes," said Mussolini, refusing to commit himself to another. Fascism was an agile insect, never still long enough to swat.

Today's fascisms can be equally elusive. We must be flexible, too, and adjust our aims as the target dodges and flits. By defending it too narrowly, we disarm ourselves against it. The stricter our definition, the less recognisable a new form of fascism becomes, because any peculiar features seem to disqualify it. The shorter the historical period to which it is made to belong, the slighter our scope for recognising its recrudescence.

Today in every continent vicious authoritarian movements are threatening freedom and compassion, justice and humanity. We should not be afraid of comprehending "fascism" broadly enough to fit them. It will help us to recognise them for what they are: threats to a decent society, potentially as destructive as any we have confronted before. Today, copy-book conditions for a fascist resurgence exist wherever Communism is recalled with loathing, while democracy is being tried by disillusionment. Elsewhere, in societies rent by growing wealth gaps, besieged by crime or ground down by unfathomable expectations, fascism can promise instant Utopia, infused by force.

It comes in many fashions, not all of them strictly anticipated by the "classic fascism" of the inter-war period. In ancient Rome, a fasci was

a bundle of sticks with an axe through the middle of it, carried before magistrates as a symbol of their power to scourge or behead aberrant citizens. These images of the bloodstained instruments of law enforcement, which Mussolini adopted as what would now be called "logo" of his party, express the essence of fascism better than any definition you can write down. Fascism is the weal of the rod and the gash of the axe: the smack of a system of values that puts the group before the individual, order before freedom, cohesion before diversity, revenge before reconciliation, retribution before compassion, the supremacy of the strong before the defence of the weak.

It assumes the supreme value of a particular order of society – without necessarily specifying that order in any agreed way – and justifies even, even, its violent enforcement by the obstruction or obliteration of dissenters, deviants, misfits and subversives. We should identify fascism not only by its conformity to a checklist of past examples, but also by the effects you can feel: the sweat of the fear of it, the stamp of its heel. The colour of its shirtings may change or fade. The form of its

Fascist threats escaped in disguise and are still effectively exonerated by historians fastidious with definitions

rites may be altered or discarded. Its models of society may differ. Still, you can always know it by its works.

Even in the age of democracy's laws of defence, fascist threats escaped in disguise and are still in effect exonerated by historians fastidious with their definitions. Franco's Spain and Salazar's Portugal were allowed to survive the Second World War. Militarist Japan, Brazilian "Integralism" and even Romanian "Guardianism" have been absolved of the taint of fascism by historical revisionists who have pointed out the peculiarities that distinguished them from Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's Germany.

Perón could come to power in post-war Argentina, calling himself a "Justicialist"; he ransacked the fascist tradition for policies and techniques, including "economic self-sufficiency" and the sickening leader-cult, but, like Franco, he distanced himself cunningly from model fascism by incorporating the rhetorics of traditional Catholic political thought. The world of their day should not have scruples to admit that these dictatorships were fascist nor should leftist critics who used the world freely have been accused of deviating it.

Let us not make the same mistake again, but be frank about classifying current threats. At one extreme, Iraqi Ba'athism under Saddam Hussein is such a close match with models of the Thirties as to be undeniably fascist. Saddam, who avows admiration for Hitler, has organised Iraqi society for war, invoked the inspiration of an ancient Reich,

waged wars of extermination against minorities, launched imperialistic lunges against neighbours, and copied the anti-Semitic frenzy of the Nazis. He looks, walks and quacks like a fascist.

Islamic fundamentalism is one of the enemies he fears most, but it represents a similar kind of menace, intolerant of pluralism, terrifying to dissenters, bloody in its enforcement of moral conformity. It has escaped classification as fascism on the grounds that it is religious; but both Franco and Perón escaped largely on the same grounds.

A society that exalts war as virtue is likely to be a danger to the rest of the world, whether or not it calls war "holy". The fact that fascism was once secular does not mean that it can never be religious.

Some of the most threatening forms of quasi-fascism today are allowed by ayatollahs and tele-preachers of the "moral majority", who insist on the unique credentials of a given set of values and want to force them on dissidents. In parts of Latin America, radical Protestant sects are already guilty of trying to mobilise congregations in support of military-backed dictatorships and hierarchies of wealth and race.

Fascist threats escaped in disguise and are still effectively exonerated by historians fastidious with definitions

Some religious cults, with their crushing effects on individual identity, their ethic of obedience to charismatic leadership, their paranoid habits and their campaigns against the rest of the world, behave in frightening ways like early fascists.

In the West, we all know about Italian post-fascists, French Frontists, German neo-Nazis, Balkan ethnic cleansers. But we are not on our guard against the more insidious fascist menace inside our own scientific and business establishments. No one who fears fascism can contemplate with equanimity the growing world power of big business corporations. Despite the common ground staked by liberalism and capitalism in the 19th and 20th centuries, business has had, since then, a poor record in opposing fascism. Business demands slack economic regulation and firm social control: the combination that brought the support of the prosperous for Hitler and Mussolini.

The "competitive" ethic of the trading arena includes many virtues, but it condemns the needy to extinction. Big businesses now commonly have uniforms to inculcate corporate identity. The model of business organisation – with its secret decision-making, unlected hierarchies, leader-cults, chains of command and subordination of the individual employee to the good of the firm – is fine for business. But, if replicated in government, it would produce fascism.

Businessmen often say that governments would be better "if they

were run like businesses". When there is a crisis of credibility in traditional politics, electorates may be tempted to try out the business model for government – just as, in previous crises, they accepted the military one.

Some businessmen – such as Ross Perot, Silvio Berlusconi and Sir James Goldsmith – have already offered themselves as saviours. The intention may be innocent; the effect, if it were ever achieved, would surely be evil.

Science is supplying the arguments and techniques for future fashions in fascism. Just as scientists of a former age made the gas chambers and super-weapons, so those of today are preparing the eugenics labs and the technology of genetic engineering. What Hitler failed to achieve by exterminating under-races and deviants, eugenics engineers now threaten by genetic manipulation.

Just as the doctrine of natural selection was formerly abused by racism, so today's geneticists – unwittingly, in most cases, as the evolutionists of the 19th century – are creating a framework into which a new form of social Darwinism, which damns the weak, can be slotted. Exponents of the "selfish gene" seem to vindicate Hitler's "divine commandment, thou shalt preserve the species".

Modern science has confronted us with a nakedly amoral and aggressive natural world, in which the source of progress is an exclusive code of collective survival, programmed into our DNA.

The extinction of individual lives is a sacrifice properly made in the interest of the species – like those of the runts forbidden to mate or the spider eaten when copulation is completed. A human world regulated along similar lines should, without hesitation, be called fascist.

Meanwhile, we are creating an environment propitious for fascism. The pace of change forced by break-neck technology is unsettling to most people and bewildering to many. In this state of mind, electors reach for "men of destiny" and prophets of order.

In increasingly complex societies – struggling to cope with rising expectations, baffling demographic imbalances and alarming external threats – order and social control come to be more highly valued than freedom and human rights. Perceptions of society undermined by moral irresponsibility, sexual permissiveness, an alienated underclass, terrorism and rising crime are the fuel of fascist revanche.

Faced with these threats, we should be robust with our language. As with every other weapon in our armoury, we should keep it sharp, but wield it freely. At present, fascism is being allowed to go unlabelled – the hate whose name we dare not speak. It is time to rehabilitate the word and hoist it as a signal to vigilance.

The writer is the author of *Millennium*, published by Bantam Press, £25.

Diary

RUTH DUDLEY EDWARDS



Two communications from New York drew my attention to the papal visit. First a fax from my friend Priscilla beginning: "Somewhere hidden among the megaliths of mid-town Manhattan there is a lone infidel bellowing out the lyrics to 'No Pope of Rome'" – a loyalist ditty she learnt when I took her last year to observe an Orange march and she rediscovered her Ulster Presbyterian roots.

My four-year-old godson, Aidan (born a lapsed Presbyterian, which is why a lapsed Catholic was deemed a suitable godmother), provided balance by sending me a request from Cardinal O'Connor to make a donation towards the costs of the papal visit in exchange for being listed on the "St Patrick's Cathedral Papal Honor Roll of Donors". He sent me also a green bookmark featuring St Patrick's gift, with a note saying: "Mummy hunted in the shop for something to go with your new Gerry-Adams-and-Nelson-Mandela mug and Orangeman's bowler, but she couldn't find anything sufficiently inappropriate."

No, Aidan, this is fine, for if I place the bookmark in the mug it may stop people drinking out of it. Last week my houseguest Kathy thoughtlessly used the mug. Equally thoughtlessly I put it in the dishwasher. I have to report that while Mandela still looks fine, Gerry Adams is fraying badly round the edges. Is this a miracle? Or a touch of the Dorian Gray?

I had no room last week for the story of Saturday night in the provinces. I arrived at the international crime writers' conference in Nottingham just in time for dinner with those mates who – like me – couldn't face the banquette. When we left the hotel, we were plunged immediately into what in Irish mythology is known as Tir na nÓg (the Land of the Young), for the streets were packed with several thousand under-25s cycling each other up.

Feeling like a quintet of Rip Van Winkles, we raced for the first eatery for grown-ups. "The whole city is pulsating with life and sexual energy," observed John, surveying the cavernous and almost empty rooms, "yet we find ourselves in a restaurant whose only other customers seem to be husbands and wives who have run out of conversation."

We fell out a bit as to whose first course was the worst. But since we

"Made with Bisto," I muttered. "The chef might at least have used fresh sage," growled Val McDermid, exaggerating her already intimidating Scots accent. "Tell him it's easy to grow."

The waiter avoided Val, who looks as if she kick-boxes lethally as her private-eye heroine, and turned threateningly on Janet Laurence, who superficially resembles the kind of tory wife who stands by her husband. "Tell me what was wrong with it?" he demanded. "Everything," she responded calmly. "To start with, the meat was not fresh." And as befits someone who writes culinary mystery stories of great authority, she explained how saltimbocca should be cooked. The waiter crumpled and stink away.

We harboured no ill-will, for everything about the restaurant and the meal was so frigida that we all hugely enjoyed bitching about it. Besides, we were entranced by our introduction to the Euro-insult.

Further to the matter of Joseph Pujo, Le Pétomane. "Now you really will be well informed," said Ron Bateman in the note accompanying his kind present of a biography of the champion farter, which proved to be exactly as John Miller described it – "in that interesting category of things that inform the mind without necessarily improving it!"

"Is a pétér thief someone who has stolen your thunder?" asks Bob Benries.

Peter Fisk eschews scatological interpretations of pétér in favour of "to explode" (but then – as he admits – he has long had a personal interest in the verb). He thinks that in the phrase "boist by his own pétér(d)" Shakespeare was referring to the small bomb of that name rather than meaning "that someone rose in the air from the result of an intestinal disorder".

However John Mattock – who was married to me for 16 years and informs me in a resigned way that he told me all about Le Pétomane long ago – thinks many of Shakespeare's vulgar derivation. "I think when most people show off with the 'boist with

his own pétér' quote," he adds, "they think it means 'hanged with his own rope', or 'yanked with his own dagger'."

I had to look up "werk", which means "struck". And yes, John, I bet you told me that, too. But you more than most will know the deficiencies of my memory.

Reporter Una alleges that last week she heard President Clinton advising combatants in the former Yugoslavia to lay down their arms and pull up their sleeves.

Hidebound in prosody, Ruthie the Diarist Boringly limits her Metrical range,

Telling her readership, Ultra-mendaciously: "Fed up with limericks? Next week we change!" OK, OK, S Robinson. I can take a hint. However I would like you to know that the first time I met Seamus Heaney properly we sniggered over a rude limerick that our mutual friend George had told me to remind him about. I'm not going to abandon limericks completely and next week I'll be publishing some of the Euro variety, but yes, you can get cracking on treating topical themes in new verse-forms – the double dactyl, as seen above, and the clerihew, modelled today by Andrew Belsey.

Mr Anthony Blair Demonstrated considerable flair In turning his outfit, Labour, Into a party of the good neighbour.

Heaney: prizes a good limerick



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Alan in Arthur's seat

If Peter Mandelson, Philip Gould, all the Saatchi brothers and the entire US advertising industry had been asked jointly to dream up the perfect launch for Labour's campaign to fight the next election, they might just have come up with last week's threatened defection of Arthur Scargill (from New Labour to socialist pastures unnamed) and yesterday's actual move of Alan Howarth MP (Conservative to Labour). The old class warrior of another era trudges off trailing his megaphone; a one-nation Tory arrives, borne on a warm wind - fresh with the scent of rose petals - to reassure the voters. They'll be whooping it up in Islington tonight.

For all the indignation - much of it genuine - expressed by his former colleagues at Mr Howarth's decision, the charges of treachery or of being a rat deserting a sinking ship will not wash. A cursory glance at the things that Mr Howarth has been saying and doing over the past couple of years shows that his defection is completely logical. Over the Disability Discrimination Bill, Mr Howarth showed courage and tenacity in opposing the Government's disgraceful decision to permit discrimination against the disabled in more than 90 per cent of British companies. He voted against the Jobseeker's Bill, argued for more money for education and has spoken out against xenophobia in the party. In a political world less dominated by whips and nervous careerism, such moves as Mr Howarth's would be more common and less surprising. More MPs from all parties ought to do it.

The worries about him begin when his letter of resignation is subjected to scrutiny. What exactly does Mr Howarth wish to achieve inside the Labour Party?

The Gulf widens over executions

The news that Saudi Arabia has executed 11 women - all of them apparently beheaded in public - within the past three years is truly shocking. There may be other executions of women that we do not know of, quite apart from the 182 men who have also been decapitated, supposedly according to Islamic law, since January of this year. Among the most dreadful of the executions, as our Middle East correspondent reports today, was that of a mother and daughter who were beheaded together in Saudi Arabia in August for allegedly killing the elder woman's husband, the girl's father.

What should be our reaction to such ferocious deeds by governments, for the defence of whose freedom - if that word does not lose its meaning in such a context - Britain, America and other western nations sent half a million troops to the Gulf in 1990?

Inevitably, the Saudis and their Gulf neighbours will try to excuse their behaviour by claiming that threats to civil order must be met with a "strong hand". Gulf rulers argue that these punishments must be seen as part of a cultural, even tribal tradition very different from our own.

Such moral relativism is as unacceptable as it is misleading. Many of the hearings that sentenced these women were travesties of justice; in some cases, it is reported that the women were given no defence lawyers. The trials themselves were held in secret and the sentences only revealed - and this rarely - after the execu-

tions had taken place. Even those who accept capital punishment in specific circumstances will find no sanction for the act of beheading in the Koran. And it cannot be argued that men and women must receive identical punishments in Saudi Arabia on spurious grounds of equality. For how can a kingdom that does not even allow women to drive cars hold them responsible for their alleged crimes?

Our response to events in the Middle East has almost always been flawed, the reporting of wars and revolutions generally skewed to present a favourable view of those "allies" that support the West's policies in the region. Thus human rights abuses in countries like Iran have been rightly condemned; but those in Saudi Arabia have not elicited a mouse-squeak of complaint by the US and British governments. Indeed, ever since the liberation of Kuwait, they have laboured to persuade us that Saudi Arabia is becoming more liberal, not more restrictive, more democratic, not more theocratic.

Of course, we derive massive economic benefit from our arms trade with the Gulf. And, sadly, few nations are prepared to lose millions of pounds of exports to save a few human lives. But perhaps the time has now come to tell our friends in the Gulf that we shall in future be much less ready to rescue them from external tyrannies, if they do not end the cruel, inhuman and degrading punishments that they impose on their own people and upon their guest workers.

ANOTHER VIEW Bill Rodgers

A bold and brave decision

Ian Howarth has made a bold, brave decision and all praise to him. But he has a bruising time ahead. There will be exhaustion and disappointment, and both the exhilaration and pain of politics. Those of us who formed the SDP 14 years ago at least had the comfort of numbers. But Howarth will be on his own, and lonely.

There may be 30 or 40 other Tory MPs who broadly share his views, but it will be a surprise if any join him. A few will remain his friends and invite him to join them for a drink. But most will say he should have stayed to fight, even when they have done precious little fighting themselves. When he visits the House of Commons - which he must do as soon as it returns - they will slip away as they see him approaching them along the library corridor, making an unexpected visit to the Gents to avoid him. In the Smoking Room they will turn their backs.

The constituency will be difficult. He will be called "traitor" in the street. He will be accused of using the Conservative Party as a stepping-stone to a status he does not really deserve. There will be obscene, anonymous postcards written in bright colours with a felt pen. Most difficult of all, there will be the sad, tearful faces of those who respected - perhaps even loved - him who now feel abandoned.

The leadership of the party will be

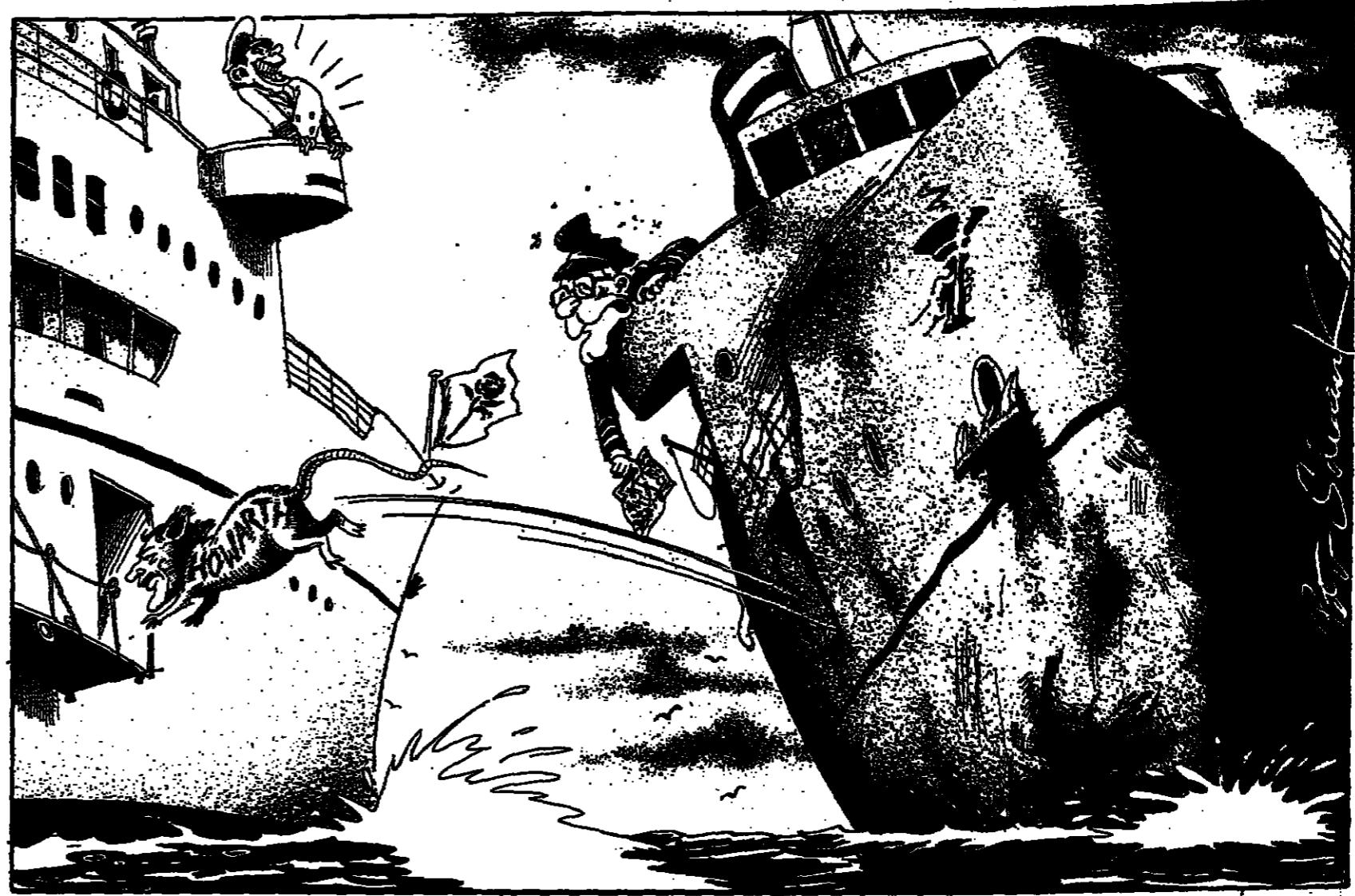
too shrewd to call him "traitor". They will prefer to diminish him: "We all know Alan... quite a good junior minister... but never really significant." He will be the sheep that lost its way.

Howarth will feel most uncomfortable in his decision to remain as MP for Stratford-on-Avon. He is right in calling constitutional convention to his defence and quoting precedent. When the SDP was launched, this was the position we adopted. But even supporters found it difficult to explain.

He knows, of course, that if he fought a by-election and won, he might not survive a general election. Alternatively, if he simply resigns and does not stand, the seat would probably go to the Liberal Democrats, who were runners-up last time. Tony Blair's heavy men will have explained how unacceptable that would be.

Howarth must cast his mind ahead. Perhaps, in the next century when the Tory party has moved back to the centre, there will be those who will say, "You helped to do it, Alan. Our party has now become the party you wanted it to be all those years ago." After all, it is the SDP that helped Blair create the Labour Party that Howarth believes is now fit for him to join.

Lord Rodgers of Quarry Bank was a Labour MP and founder member of the Social Democratic Party.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Balancing solicitors' needs and clients' rights

From Mr Keith Richards

Sir: The "angry" reaction of the Law Society's president, Martin Mears, to the damning *Which?* report from the Consumers' Association on the quality of legal advice clouds the real issue ("Consumers lay down the law on bad advice", 5 October).

There is no arguing with the central depressing conclusion of *Which?*'s rigorous and comprehensive research - that solicitors too often hand shoddy and inappropriate advice, despite a clear duty of care to clients, and the undisputed responsibility of the Law Society is to promote high standards among its members. The Consumers' Association has its own responsibility - to protect consumers and to act in their interests - and the only way to put the quality of solicitors' advice to the test was to do this anonymously, consulting the high-street professionals just as any consumer would.

All this clearly irks Mr Mears. However, in alleging that one tiny aspect of one of our standard legal answers was incorrect, he is mistaken. He claims that our

researchers could not have referred a complaint to the building society ombudsman, because the ombudsman could not deal with cases earlier than June 1994. In fact, a referral was entirely possible, depending on the status of the mortgage.

Perhaps we should not be surprised at the Law Society's inactivity. In a pamphlet issued before his election with his then running mate and now vice-president, Robert Sayter, Mr Mears urged a "fundamental change in attitude by the Law Society", with "less emphasis on clients' 'rights' and more on solicitors' needs". Sadly, the Law Society's reaction to the *Which?* report suggests that the promised "fundamental change" is already under way. But surely "solicitors' needs" include maintaining a respected and trusted profession? Without respect and trust, there is little left.

We would have been delighted to report that the majority of solicitors were giving clients best advice and being fair and open about charges. This was not to be. Our message might not be one that Mr Mears welcomes, but a

recognition of the problems of the profession, and a willingness to put the Law Society's house in order, would be more positive than "shooting the messenger". Yours faithfully,
KERRA RICHARDS
Senior Lawyer
Consumers' Association
London, NW1

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comment

On the eve of Conservative Party conference, Alan Howarth explains his decision to join Labour

'The party has given up on fairness'

At long last we have a political party in Britain that is both committed to social justice and tough-minded about the practicalities of government. That is why I have joined now Labour.

The ethical core of socialism has always attracted me, since as a student I was moved by reading Tawney's *Equality*. I was inspired by the generosity of vision that I found, the passionate concern for justice, the belief in the benign possibilities of the state, the optimism for humanity. When first entitled to vote, in 1966, I voted Labour.

Later, however, there were too many features of British socialism that I could not agree with. Central planning and large-scale bureaucracy presupposed a capacity on the part of the gentleman in Whitehall to know best – which experience showed he did not have. Public ownership too often failed to provide a worthwhile accountability to the people whose lives were so importantly affected by those concentrations of economic power. While the case for redistribution of wealth and power remained, and remains, valid, a politics predicated on class antagonism seemed to me too often negative and to exacerbate divisions in society unhealthily.

I responded to Margaret Thatcher's project because of her challenge to inherited orthodoxy and the establishment, her courage and her moral energy. Thatcher's fervour proved, however, to lack generosity. Her crusade to cast off the shackles of big government became a licence for Darwinian individualism. Her radicalism hardened into an intolerant new orthodoxy. Her heirs practise either a listless pastiche of Thatcherism or a ferocious caricature of it.

With the honourable exceptions of a handful of beleaguered ministers and backbenchers, today's Conservative Party has,

in effect, given up on the basic ethical responsibilities of government: to promote fairness and to hold society together.

An unpleasant ideology – a Little Englander Gingrichism, neurotically hostile to the state and adulterous of the strong, while contemptuous of the weak and the outsider – is capturing the Conservative Party. We have seen the effects of it in practical policy terms this year in the cuts in invalidity benefit and unemployment benefit. The Government's refusal to legislate comprehensive civil rights for disabled people and the harsh treatment of women prisoners and asylum seekers.

Meanwhile, new Labour has discarded the policies of the Seventies that make no sense for the Nineties, and is embracing new practical means to apply its enduring ethical values. New Labour has seized the ground of "one nation" politics that the Conservative Party has abandoned. In his address to the Labour Party conference, Tony Blair spoke of socialism as a belief in society, in co-operation, in achieving together what we are unable to achieve alone. I tried to say the same thing when I challenged Michael Portillo, in debate on the Jobseeker's Bill in January, to recollect that we are members one of another.

On issue after issue over the past three years, since I left the Government, I have found myself arguing the same case as Labour.

It is an illusion for Conservatives to suppose that making the rich richer will make the poor richer. The trickle-down theory has not worked, and if ministers could release themselves from intellectual autopilot, they would recognise that The Rowntree Inquiry into Income and Wealth, soberly and with academic scrupulousness, documents the widening inequality in Britain and the unhappiness and costs that



Alan Howarth finds the politics he wanted. Caters News Agency

come with it. When these issues were debated in Parliament earlier this year, the Government organised systematic barracking from the back benches and rubbed the integrity of one of the report's authors.

The orchestrated vilification by ministers of single mothers at the Conservative Party conference in 1993 was one of the most shaming episodes I can recall in British politics.

Similarly, the Government

has refused to be open-minded about the minimum wage and seeks to discredit it through scaremongering. Its opposition to the Social Chapter is based not on intelligent analysis of what its effects would be, but on fear and exploitation of anti-European sentiment in Britain. That is the reverse of responsible leadership.

Labour is right to advocate a minimum wage on moral and economic grounds. The minimum wage is the bottom line of decency. It is not decent for the Government to allow privatised utility directors windfall fortunes and go on to abolish capital gains tax and inheritance tax, having themselves abolished minimum wages set by Wages Councils. It is imprudent, as well as cruel, to degrade our workforce by encouraging pay cuts. It is crazy, more than ever in a knowledge-based economy, to cut public expenditure on training and to refuse to fund schools adequately.

Employers and government alike need to nurture and develop our labour force so we go upmarket in our skills and more of our people are able to operate successfully in the global economy.

The Treasury's obsessive negativity, the Government's fetish about reducing public expenditure as a proportion of GDP, and Conservative backbenchers' desperation to ingratiate themselves with voters through tax cuts conspire to prevent the investment we need in public services. Tony Blair and Gordon Brown are right to insist that disciplined management of the economy and the proper funding of public services – the health service, education – should have precedence over tax cuts. We cannot accept that the affluent should have an electoral veto on constructive fiscal policy.

The Labour Party under-

stands the urgent need to restore pluralism and accountability if the quality of our democracy is to be restored. Conservatives used to criticise Labour for its tendency to centralise power. This Conservative government has systematically opposed and stripped down every alternative centre of authority. The Government debilitates our democratic culture by capping the revenue-raising and expenditure powers of elected local government while proliferating its own patronage through quangos.

Transnational economic power will increasingly require competent transnational institutions of government. Statesmanship would encourage trust in sensibly remodelled European institutions rather than surrender to xenophobic panic.

A rational government would want freedom of information to enable less trivial and more thorough democratic debate. Ministers not possessed with executive arrogance would not repeatedly fall foul of the judges and, so far from railing petulantly against the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, would incorporate the Convention into our domestic law.

Conservatives should realise, as Labour does, the dangerous extent of disillusion with politics. The Government should not shun their back benches to scupper Nolan. They should agree on a legislative programme to restore checks and balances and pluralism to our democracy.

The Labour Party led by Blair and John Prescott offers Britain a new politics: of generosity and inclusiveness, of realism that appeals to our better nature. It is the politics I have long wanted and now found.

The writer is MP for Stratford-on-Avon.

There is a new musical based on the Al Jolson story coming soon, and to coincide with it they are reissuing a revised version of Michael Freedland's 1972 book on the great man.

I have looked through the Freedland book and it seems a fair enough account of his life to me. However, it cannot pretend to compare with the greatest book ever written in this area. I refer, of course, to that enduring classic of biography, *Boswell's Life of Johnson*.

Sadly, I find that many people these days honour this book more by mentioning it than by reading it so, for all those who, to their own detriment, have never tasted the delights of *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, I bring you a few enticing morsels today.

From time to time (writes Boswell) I managed to induce Johnson to talk of his childhood in Russia, a country he remembered with clarity though with little affection. "Russia is a country whose size you can hardly comprehend without having been there," he told me. "It is so large that when a tsar died, it took news of his death several weeks to reach every corner of the empire, and during that time we Jews would go indoors and hide."

I asked him what the reason was for this. "Why, sir, out of sheer terror. You must know that Russians veer between gloom and exhilaration. On the occasion of the death of a tsar, they were at first in despair, but then so overjoyed at the accession of another one that they would burst a Jewish village would go indoors and hide."

I asked him if this were not a curious form of celebration. "Not if you are a Russian, no, sir. A nation which can burn down its own capital in the face of Napoleon's troops would have no trouble in burning down a small Jewish village just to let off steam. However, my parents found it a strain living in such a volatile place so they determined to find a new life in the Promised Land."

Meaning Israel? "No, sir, not Israel. That was not to become the Promised Land for a long time yet. Or, rather, it was already the Promised Land but only because the European allies had promised it to so many countries. It had been promised to the Jews, and the Arabs, and the French and the Egyptians and, for all I know, the Welsh. Yes, you could call it the Promised Land."

At which the great man laughed, and wrote the remark down, then went solemn again. "No, sir, the United States was the promised land, with no Cossacks and where they did not burn down Jewish villages every time a president left of-



MILES KINGTON

formance, applied the black make-up until I had assumed my pose, but because they had seen me create the illusion, it remained an illusion for the audience. They did not think of me as a black man. They thought of me as a white man taking on another identity, whose colour happened to be ebony. This was Brechtian before Brecht arrived."

I asked the great man if he perceived no irony in the fact that he constantly sang of Dixie and the dear old Southland and being way down on the levee, although these were places he had not grown up in and probably not even visited. "What would you have me do, sir?" growled Johnson. "Sing of Russia's steppes and the endless Mongolian vistas? I had grown up there, but saw no advantage in advertising the fact in song. I sang of dear old Dixie, and cornbread and cottonfields because that is what they wanted to hear. We entered into a compact together to share nostalgia for a past that had never existed. We created an illusion and what is art if not an illusion?"

Is it not a search for the truth? "Nay, sir," said Johnson. "There is no such thing as the truth, only different truths for us to choose from. And the one that concerns me is the fact that I am the greatest. And I shall go on being so."

Good-bye battery



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KINETIC

In interview, Donald Macintyre gauges the reaction of the Tory chairman, Brian Mawhinney

'This is all much ado about nothing'

If anyone can rise to the unpalatable task of being the first Tory chairman in memory to lose an MP to the main Opposition party 18 months – at most – away from an election, it could yet be Brian Mawhinney.

He was no doubt tempted on Saturday, as he hastily covered the Tory flank exposed by Howarth's momentous decision, to reach for something a little stronger than the Lucozade for which he has a passion. For as he prepares for this week's party conference he faces a challenge of the order that his predecessor Jeremy Hanley never faced in his worst nightmares.

The case Mawhinney laid out yesterday, on Day One of the aftershock, was typically robust. In a pointed gibe at Howarth's serial political monogamy, he sniped that Howarth had switched from Labour support mingled with admiration for the one-nation Toryism of Butler and Macmillan to deep-dyed Thatcherism, only to end up switching to Labour allegedly because the Tories had become too right-wing.

Howarth had discussed his doubts with everyone except John Major, and in the ultimate snub to the voters of Stratford he wasn't even prepared to offer himself up to them by calling a by-election.

A professedly "totally relaxed" Mawhinney told the *Independent* yesterday this defection would have "no effect" on the agenda the party will unveil this week – a packed series of policy announcements "which will affect millions of people in contrast to Alan Howarth's, which affects only him. He represents William Shakespeare's birthplace and this is really Much Ado about Nothing. The more we learn about the reasoning that lies



Brian Mawhinney: a robust case. Photograph: Edward Sykes

Howarth will no doubt see this as underlining his worst fears. The Liberal Democrats, Dr Mawhinney is expected to say, are the federalists, Labour Party the centralisers, and the

front-rank politicians. It is a quality that may serve him well in this latest crisis. He knows, for instance, exactly how to find the Opposition's jugular. He is almost certainly correct in identifying the Labour confusion over rail privatisation as the most obvious weakness of last week's Labour conference.

This was a classic example of the gap between rhetoric and reality which it has been his job to expose for three months, a task which now acquires a new sense of urgency.

Howarth's defection – reducing

at a stroke the Government's majority from seven to five – suddenly raises the spectre of a 1996 election. Can the party handle that? "We will be ready to go whenever the Prime Minister says to go."

Will they? If you ask about the number of party members or their lamentable age profile – the estimated average age of the rank and file is over 60 – he comes close to dismissing the question as an irrelevance. He claims that membership is 700,000 to 750,000 and that "anecdotally" the experience of constituency chairmen he encounters on his travels is that "people are signing up in numbers."

While you can't verify these figures, of course, because there is no central membership register, the wetsish Bow Group has plumped for a figure less than half Dr Mawhinney's. But he replies briskly that he doesn't have time to spend on "a lengthy analysis of historical trends of membership".

The reportedly dire state of Tory party funds is certainly not irrelevant; but here he is laconic to the point of obscurity. First, he insists that Major's success in the leadership election has helped to release a new flow of

Party centralisation.

Tories the party that believes in

co-operation where it serves the UK's interests, but acting on its own where it doesn't.

Dr Mawhinney has a degree of focus unusual even among

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Generation Why



MARKET SUMMARY								
STOCK MARKETS								
FT-SE 100								
Index Close Week's Chg. Change (%) 12 Wk High 12 Wk Low %Chg.								
FTSE 100 3526.5 18.3 0.5 3570.8 2943.4 4.0								
FTSE 250 3579.0 30.2 0.8 3697.3 3300.9 3.5								
FTSE 350 1764.4 10.1 0.6 1778.3 1477.0 3.9								
FT Small Cap 1976.6 6.2 0.3 1993.1 1678.6 3.3								
FT All-Share 1743.4 9.7 0.6 1757.6 1465.2 3.9								
New York 4762.7 -26.4 -0.6 4801.8 3674.6 2.4								
Tokyo 18506.3 563.2 3.3 20148.8 14485.4 0.8								
Hong Kong 9872.9 227.6 2.4 9940.0 8867.9 3.3								
Frankfurt 2171.4 -15.6 -0.7 2187.0 1917.0 1.9								
Paris 1802.8 21.2 1.2 2017.3 1721.8 3.8								
Milan 9754.0 -157.0 -1.6 10911.0 9265.0 2.0								
MAIN PRICE CHANGES								
Last: FTSE 350 companies								
Rises - Top 5	Price (p)	Change (p)	%Chg.	Falls - Top 5	Price (p)	Change (p)	%Chg.	
Boddington 369.5 123.5 46.43	Myers, Cable	135	12	82				
Armitage 278 33.5 13.7	Howe, Sturt	133.5	10.5	7.3				
Transtar House 31 3 10.7	Greens	462	36	7.2				
M&G Group 1225 107 9.5	Polyplast	155	11	6.7				
Nimh in City 470 36 8.3	Transport Dev	197.5	13.5	6.4				
INTEREST RATES								
UK interest rates								
5 year cash 8-30 year gilt	6 Oct 95	6 Jul 95		US interest rates	6 Oct 95	6 Jul 95		
6.25	6.25	6.25		6.25	6.25	6.25		
6.50	6.50	6.50		6.50	6.50	6.50		
6.75	6.75	6.75		6.75	6.75	6.75		
7.00	7.00	7.00		7.00	7.00	7.00		
7.25	7.25	7.25		7.25	7.25	7.25		
7.50	7.50	7.50		7.50	7.50	7.50		
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9.25	9.25	9.25		9.25	9.25	9.25		
9.50	9.50	9.50		9.50	9.50	9.50		
9.75	9.75	9.75		9.75	9.75	9.75		
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Source: HSBC Markets								
CURRENCIES								
£/\$								
1.581	1.581	1.581		1.581	1.581	1.581		
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1.630	1.630	1.630		1.630	1.630	1.630		
1.631	1.631	1.631		1.631	1.631	1.631		
1.632	1.632	1.632		1.632	1.632	1.632	</	



GAVYN DAVIES

"What is clearly needed almost everywhere is a large tightening in fiscal policy with a simultaneous easing in monetary policy"

A mountain of reasons to reduce public debt

Jerusalem cannot be built on a mountain of debt, Gordon Brown told the Labour Party conference last week, to surprisingly little dissent from the floor. But the rest of the world, it seems, is less willing to accept this truth. Public debt has now been rising remorselessly for more than two decades in the developed countries, and this has resulted in a sharp increase in global real interest rates.

Although the UK has been a notable exception to the general rule of rising debt, we have been unable to avoid the adverse consequences of excess borrowing by other countries. Global capital flows mean that each country is now vitally affected by the build-up of debt elsewhere in the world economy – and those countries which are able to control their debt have every right to demand that others do the same.

It has been common in the UK to hear complaints that the budget rules written into the Maastricht Treaty constitute an unwarranted interference in the rights of a sovereign state to set its own tax rates and public-spending policies. But this misses a key point, which will remain true whether or not the European Union ever adopts a monetary union. The existence of adverse spill-over effects from one country's debt to another country's real interest rates creates a new right for low-debt nations like the UK to complain about the bad behaviour of others – just as the damaging effects of passive smoking justify new demands that the freedom of the smoker should be curtailed.

For much of the post-war period, economists have found it difficult to prove to governments that excessive budget deficits are necessarily bad for domestic interest rates. One possible reason for this failure was the so-called "Ricardian Equivalence" argument. This essentially states that the private sector will recognise that a build-up in public debt will have to be redeemed sooner or

later through an increase in taxation. Anticipating this, individuals will simply save more whenever budget deficits rise so that they can afford to pay the higher taxes later. The consequent rise in private savings eliminates the adverse effects of higher government borrowing on real interest rates, which are unaffected therefore by budget deficits.

The problem with this argument is that it demands an almost incredible degree of rationality, foresight, and concern about future generations from the person on the Clapham omnibus. Not surprisingly, most studies have found that full Ricardian equivalence does not apply, though some have suggested that changes in private saving do offset about half of the effect of a rise in government borrowing. This should still leave a large adverse effect on real interest rates to be uncovered as governments borrow more.

Why then has this effect been so hard to establish? Most likely, it is because it does not operate within any individual economy, but operates powerfully on a global scale. When a single country increases its budget deficit, it can draw nowadays on a huge global pool of savings to finance its increased borrowing, so the adverse effects on interest rates are spread too thinly to be immediately noticeable.

The problem, though, is that this creates an incentive for any individual government to increase its borrowing, since there will be no obvious pain through higher domestic interest rates. As each country responds to this incentive, the build-up in global levels of debt does indeed raise interest rates – but it is in no country's interest to be the first to curtail borrowing, since acting alone will have no effect on global real rates. Hence there is a clear case for supranational policing of excessive deficits.

All this has been mere speculation until recently, but now there is solid evidence which confirms that global real interest rates are strongly related to government borrowing around the world. For example, a recent IMF study by Thomas Hellebrand and Robert Wescott finds that global real rates have averaged 1 to 2 per cent in the 1960s and 3 to 4.5 per cent in the 1981-94 period.

Two factors explain the rise in real rates. First – and harmlessly – the real rate of return on productive private investment has increased, raising the expected return on equities. This has bid up the real yield on competing assets, including bonds. Second, however, the rise in gross government debt has had a massive adverse effect on real rates. According to the IMF study, each 1 percentage point rise in the global debt/GDP ratio increases the long-term real rate of

interest by around 0.1 per cent. Since the late 1970s, the global debt ratio has risen from around 40 per cent to about 75 per cent, which would be enough to account for the vast majority of the rise in real interest rates over this period.

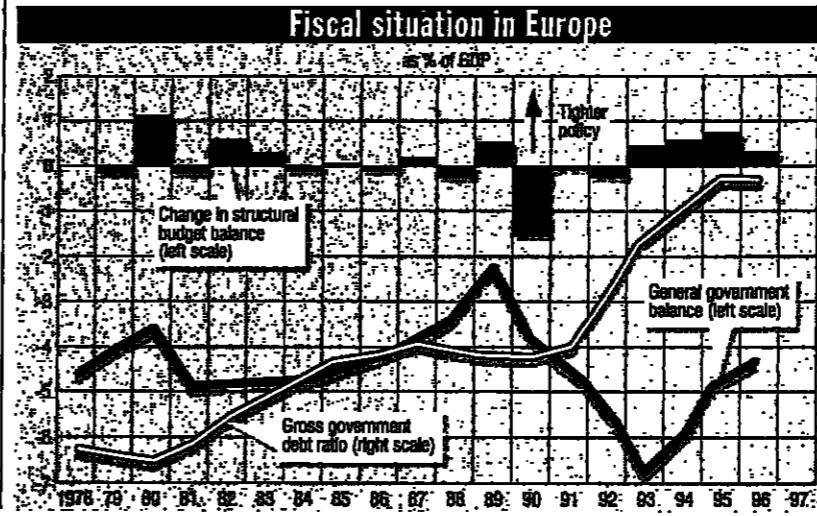
As the graph shows, much of this increase in debt has come in continental Europe. This has happened despite the fact that the underlying fiscal stance, measured by the change in the structural budget balance, has been tightening for much of the past decade – and has done so in each year since 1992. In other words, governments have been willing to raise taxes or cut public spending in an attempt to curtail debt, largely in order to comply with the Maastricht criteria. But only in Britain – ironically a country that does not appear to worry much about hitting the Maastricht criteria for their own sake – has

the budget consolidation been large enough to hold out the promise of a declining debt ratio in the next few years.

Who is to blame for this rise in debt? The orthodox answer is that governments have sought short-term political gains by increasing public spending, but have been unwilling to finance this through tax rises. This is the line taken by most central bankers. But a less orthodox answer is to blame the central bankers themselves. On this argument, interest rates have been held far too high for too long, either because of a desire to hit inflation targets, or to fix the exchange rate inside the ERM. The result has been a prolonged recession, which has automatically raised budget deficits as unemployment has risen.

This debate is a bit chicken-and-eggish. But what is clearly needed almost everywhere is a large tightening in fiscal policy – exactly the mix which the UK has had since 1993. Most countries are officially committed to this mix, but few are actually pursuing it with sufficient rigour, and instead are allowing the global debt ratio to creep inexorably upwards. If they continue to do this, which they probably will, the real interest rate will rise further, and this will crowd out an ever larger number of private investment projects in the developed economies. More unemployment will result.

Indeed, we need a world fiscal authority empowered to enforce a Maastricht Treaty with large (albeit only in its fiscal manifestation). Only with such a supranational police force – a souped-up IMF – can the adverse consequences of one country's fiscal actions on the well-being of others be properly curtailed. But is that likely? About as likely, I would say, as the election of Eric Cantona as the honorary president of the Crystal Palace supporters' club.



THE MONDAY INTERVIEW Sir Iain Vallance, chairman of BT, and Michel Bon, president of France Telecom, stake their claims to reign supreme in the expanding European telecommunications market. Each scents victory, but can they both win?

BT kept waiting on lines to Europe's free market

There is an air of scepticism whenever Sir Iain Vallance is asked about European liberalisation. Keen as the British Telecom chairman is to embrace the market, the changes he wants implemented have been a long time coming, in spite of the rhetoric in Brussels and worthy words from governments in member states.

BT takes every opportunity to bang the drum for a more open market in Europe. This, he believes, is one of the consolation prizes for being exposed at an early stage to the cold winds of competition on its home ground, even if the telecommunications giant still dominates the UK market.

"The Commission has got the bit between their teeth and that opens up potential opportunities for BT. We have already gone through the 'painful adolescence' of passing from state ownership to private ownership and of liberalisation in the marketplace. We are all set and ready to go."

But according to Sir Iain, no one really knows when competition will really happen. Full competition right across the board, with genuine choice and the level of maturity seen in the UK market, could take 10 years, he said.

The problem from BT's point of view is not so much the in-

roduction of directives on which competition will be based, but the length of time it can take directives to be implemented in national law. Even then, Sir Iain observes: "They are not necessarily observed."

He added: "In spite of good words about hitting the tarmac

petition directorate charged with making things happen has its heart in the right place but not enough resources in enforcement terms. "A key to getting a move on is strengthening of the enforcement arm in enforcement of directives. I am happy with the directives coming

from the two parties on Euro-issues. Sir Iain points out: "This is Treaty of Rome stuff. It predates Maastricht."

From BT's position, it has not only a lot to gain from the ability to compete freely across the continent, it has a lot to give in terms of lessons learnt.

The consensus is that other member states have barely begun to tackle the thorny issue of regulation. Without that there little point in having an open marketplace, which would be all too easy for dominant players to abuse.

"We need regulation which is independent of government. That is extremely important and it is very difficult to achieve while some public telephone operators are state-owned," Sir Iain said.

"We need a proper licensing procedure and interconnection terms. If we had the same interconnection terms across Europe as we have here in the UK we would be laughing. We are not asking for anything pro-competitive. The best we can hope for is something that is not anti-competitive."

He went on: "There are no signs yet of any country in Europe or indeed anywhere else which would lean over so far to encourage competition as we do in the UK."

Sir Iain rejects the notion that

with the wheels running there will be some dragging of feet. But directionally it is right – the Commission in Brussels wants it and customers want it.

Some countries interpret directives very narrowly in their own law, others over-interpret.

Asked whether the UK falls into the category of the over-zealous, he admits: "In our line of business, we would also take the same line.

In spite of differences between

ing up. All the right items are on the agenda. Our concern is not the agenda; it is getting it into national law and getting it enforced. That requires a will and a determination."

He believes that BT and the Government at least are "shoulder to shoulder" in this drive for liberalisation, and that any future Labour administration would also take the same line.

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In spite of differences between

business

TODAY

Companies:

Analysts believe the outlook for shares in Midlands-based Lucas Industries, the automotive and aerospace group, should be more positive following last week's settlement with the US Defense Department. The group should benefit from several trading improvements in leading industrialised countries, although not enough to warrant an increase in dividend payments.

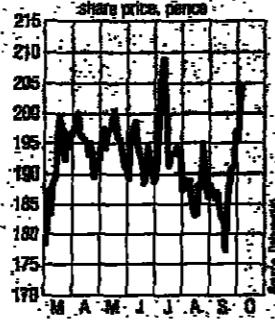
The rise in West European car production in the first half by 9.10 per cent and the re-introduction of government and manufacturer-based incentives in France is seen as particularly good news for Lucas's leading position in the diesel market. The belated resurgence of the German market should also be a boon. The strength of its automotive business is reflected in this year's £1bn, 10-year contract with Volkswagen. Even the US market has shown growth of 6 per cent.

On the downside, the industry is experiencing profit margin pressure although analysts believe the group will feel the squeeze less than other European suppliers.

Analysts expect annual pre-tax profits of £157m compared with £84.2m in the previous year. Earnings per share are expected to rise from 63p to around 101p. An unchanged 7p dividend is forecast.

Interims: Culver Holdings, Firecrest Group, Forward Technology, Martin Currie Private Trust.

Lucas Industries



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RUGBY LEAGUE WORLD CUP: Larder's tactics pay off as Andy Farrell kick-starts Centenary tournament in gripping fashion

England capitalise on Australian mistakes

DAVE HADFIELD

reports from Wembley

England 20

Australia 16

For England and for the Halifax Centenary World Cup in general, everything worked out far better than could have been reasonably expected at Wembley on Saturday.

Not only was there a crowd, 41,271, which vindicated the debatable decision to take the opening match of the tournament to London, there was also a contest for them to savour which did everything that could have been asked in terms of promoting the rest of the competition.

It was not among the best of international matches: there were too many mistakes in it for that. But it was consistently gripping and it was won by the side that organised and executed its plan the better.

An England side weakened by injuries inspired little pre-match confidence, but they played, individually and collectively, well above expectations.

If Andrew Farrell won the man of the match award from loose forward, then his predecessor in the role, Phil Clarke, was not far behind after the way he played in his second choice position of second row.

That was one arguable tactical decision where Phil Larder, the England coach, got it resoundingly right.

He kept Farrell in the role which he has firmed so well for Wigan this season, giving him the freedom to use his staggeringly wide array of gifts.

Farrell not only scored a crucial try before half-time to keep his side in touch with their opponents, using all his formidable size and strength to charge over down the blind side from the base of the scrum, he was also instrumental in forcing Australia back, especially in

the second half, with a high calibre kicking game.

Clarke, playing much closer to the middle of the field than when he has the number 13 on his back, was an inspiration in both attack and defence.

The other major pluses were the players with whom England got away with obvious risks.

In the absence of Martin Offiah, John Bentley had a solid and mistake-free game on the left wing. Karl Harrison, with a period of recuperation in mid-match, helped Andy Platt get through the necessary work up front and the youngster, Kris Radlinski, had just one dodgy moment in an otherwise assured display.

His error in failing to get under a Brad Fittler bomb which then sat up conveniently for Mark Coyne allowed Australia to draw level, a situation from which past experience suggested that they would go on to win the match.

The fact that this did not happen owed something to an uncharacteristically error-prone effort on their part and rather more to England's ability to take advantage of those errors.

John Hopoate's loss of the ball in the tackle was a tribute not just to the way Lee Jackson and Barrie-Jon Mather – another conspicuous English success – hit him in that particular tackle. It was also part of a cumulative effect – a chain reaction as Diana Ross put it – set in motion by consistently punishing defence throughout the match.

The other out-of-character flaw in Australia's game – their loss of handling when in promising attacking positions – was at centre stage when Paul Newlove, fired up out of all recognition by something at half-time, intercepted a Jim Dymock pass for a try that made the match safe.

No doubt Bob Fulton, the Australian coach, is right when he says that Australia in the final would be a much tougher

opposition. It is hard to imagine them dropping as much ball again and there will certainly be some adjustment in the line up.

Hopoate's place is obviously under threat. Apart from his blunder to give Jason Robinson his try, he also showed his immaturity as well, perhaps, as

trying to prove that he really is a fair dimbul Australian by sledging Radlinski after his mistake.

Hopoate chose to play for Australia rather than Tonga in this tournament. After his embarrassments in Saturday's match, the Tongan manager, Inoke Faletau, said that he would now be lucky to make their team.

A regrouped Australian side will still be as dangerous as ever, if the World Cup follows its natural course and they meet England in the final at Wembley on October 28.

Fulton, who had grounds for complaint over Chris Joyn's try



Australia's Tim Brasher gets a lift from Jason Robinson but fails to grab the ball in Saturday's World Cup opener at Wembley. Photograph: David Ashdown

in the second half, did not feel that there was too much wrong with them on Saturday that a little more match practice will not cure. "I thought our defence was good. How many breaks did England make against us?" he asked.

For now, the short answer to that is: "Enough."

Ridge spares New Zealand blushes

New Zealand 25

Tonga 24

New Zealand escaped humiliation and almost certain elimination from the Halifax Centenary World Cup in the last two minutes of one of the most thrilling international matches ever played, writes Dave Hadfield.

Two kicks from their captain, Matthew Ridge, salvaged the Kiwi pride last night. In the last minute of normal time his conversion of Richie Blackmore's try brought New Zealand level.

Tonga started both halves with a spine-fingering intensity, going

with almost two minutes of injury time gone his drop goal robbed Tonga of a draw that was the very least they deserved for a magnificent display that frightened New Zealand half to death.

Warrington's biggest gate of the season saw Daine Mann, dumped by both the club and by New Zealand two years ago, return to haunt them. The Tongan captain led a magnificent pack and also tormented the Kiwi with an unexpected range of kicking skills.

Tonga started both halves with a spine-fingering intensity, going

ahead for the first time in the ninth minute when Willie Grummet took a pass from Lee Hansen to score an error behind his own line by Syd Eru and Jimmy Veikoso going over from Duane Mann's excellent kick.

Three more goals from Asi Amano and a try when Salei Finau picked up Tony Iro's fumble gave Tonga a 12-point lead with seven minutes left.

The introduction of the Kiwi substitutes had a reviving effect, Hoku Okesene scoring from a move begun by Paul and Ridge kicking from the touchline.

The scene was set for a great

match to end with a great finish, even if it was a heart-breaking one for Tonga.

Three-quarters of the way through the game, the Kiwi pack had a reviving effect, Hoku Okesene scoring from a move begun by Paul and Ridge kicking from the touchline.

The scene was set for a great

ending movements – a style of play that knows no fear, physical or technical. They began with two tries in the first eight minutes from Waisale Sovata and Noa Nadruku.

South Africa were a very different proposition. They may be the biggest side man for in the tournament, but their development is still strictly at the head-down-charge stage.

By keeping the game tight in the middle of Cougar Park, however, they managed to stay in touch for most of the first half, three penalties from their full-back, Pierre Van Wyk,

bringing them within four

points. There was even a moment when they could have taken the lead, their captain, Jaco Booyens, making a powerful break but finding no one in support. Fiji then took the ball to the other end of the field through myriad pairs of hands for Brendon Hill was the second

over Iles Toga. South Africa lost

count of the number of players who poleaxed themselves in their efforts to stop him.

Whatever might happen in other codes, when it comes to stopping Fiji in rugby league, the only advantage South Africa have is two national anthems.

Fiji Seru, the possessor of the finest sidestep among a team where few players would deign to do anything as mundane as running in a straight line, scored two of their final total of 10 tries. The firm favourite of a crowd brought up on local heroes like Brendon Hill was the second over Iles Toga. South Africa lost

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who poleaxed themselves in

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Keighley crowd make Fiji feel at home

Fiji 52

South Africa 6

Long before full-time at Keighley, the Fijians were honorary Cougars, writes Dave Hadfield. It always was a marriage made in fixture-planners' heaven; the most excitable neutral crowd of the World Cup watching what are traditionally some of the most exciting rugby players in the world. No wonder that the small Yorkshire town warmed to them in a very big way.

Fiji produced their full repertoire of extravagant han-

dling movements – a style of play that knows no fear, physical or technical. They began with two tries in the first eight minutes from Waisale Sovata and Noa Nadruku.

South Africa were a very

different proposition. They may

be the biggest side man for in

the tournament, but their de-

velopment is still strictly at the

head-down-charge stage.

By keeping the game tight in

the middle of Cougar Park,

however, they managed to stay

in touch for most of the first

half, three penalties from their

full-back, Pierre Van Wyk,

bringing them within four

points. There was even a

moment when they could have

taken the lead, their captain, Jaco

Booyens, making a powerful

break but finding no one in sup-

port. Fiji then took the ball to the

other end of the field through

myriad pairs of hands for Brendon

Hill was the second over Iles

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Whatever might happen in

other codes, when it comes to

stopping Fiji in rugby league, the

only advantage South Africa have

is two national anthems.

Athletics

Kenya's Benson Masey ran the fastest

10 miles in Britain to win yesterday's

Bupa Great South Run in Portsmouth.

His 56sec was six seconds bet-

ter than the 56sec two years ago.

Liz McColgan won the women's race in 53min 2.2sec – the fastest time by a British woman over 10 miles this year.

BUPA GREAT SOUTH RUN (Portsmouth, 10 miles): Kenya's Benson Masey (56.06); Liz McColgan (53.02); Michaela (54.32); 2nd McColgan (54.32); 3rd Fiona (54.32); 4th Diane (54.32); 5th Diane (54.32); 6th Diane (54.32); 7th Diane (54.32); 8th Diane (54.32); 9th Diane (54.32); 10th Diane (54.32); 11th Diane (54.32); 12th Diane (54.32); 13th Diane (54.32); 14th Diane (54.32); 15th Diane (54.32); 16th Diane (54.32); 17th Diane (54.32); 18th Diane (54.32); 19th Diane (54.32); 20th Diane (54.32); 21st Diane (54.32); 22nd Diane (54.32); 23rd Diane (54.32); 24th Diane (54.32); 25th Diane (54.32); 26th Diane (54.32); 27th Diane (54.32); 28th Diane (54.32); 29th Diane (54.32); 30th Diane (54.32); 31st Diane (54.32); 32nd Diane (54.32); 33rd Diane (54.32); 34th Diane (54.32); 35th Diane (54.32); 36th Diane (54.32); 37th Diane (54.32); 38th Diane (54.32); 39th Diane (54.32); 40th Diane (54.32); 41st Diane (54.32); 42nd Diane (54.32); 43rd Diane (54.32); 44th Diane (54.32); 45th Diane (54.32); 46th Diane (54.32); 47th Diane (54.32); 48th Diane (54.32); 49th Diane (54.32); 50th Diane (54.32); 51st Diane (54.32); 52nd Diane (54.32); 53rd Diane (54.32); 54th Diane (54.32); 55th Diane (54.32); 56th Diane (54.32); 57th Diane (54.32); 58th Diane (54.32); 59th Diane (54.32); 60th Diane (54.32); 61st Diane (54.32); 62nd Diane (54.32); 63rd Diane (54.32); 64th Diane (54.32); 65th Diane (54.32); 66th Diane (54.32); 67th Diane (54.32); 68th Diane (54.32); 69th Diane (54.32); 70th Diane (54.32); 71st Diane (54.32); 72nd Diane (54.32); 73rd Diane (54.32); 74th Diane (54.32); 75th Diane (54.32); 76th Diane (54.32); 77th Diane (54.32); 78th Diane (54.32); 79th Diane (54.32); 80th Diane (54.32); 81st Diane (54.32); 82nd Diane (54.32); 83rd Diane (54.32); 84th Diane (54.32); 85th Diane (54.32); 86th Diane (54.32); 87th Diane (54.32); 88th Diane (54.32); 89th Diane (54.32); 90th Diane (54.32); 91st Diane (54.32); 92nd Diane (54.32); 93rd Diane (54.32); 94th Diane (54.32); 95th Diane (54.32); 96th Diane (54.32); 97th Diane (54.32); 98th Diane (54.32); 99th Diane (54.32); 100th Diane (54.32); 101st Diane (54.32); 102nd Diane (54.32); 103rd Diane (54.32); 104th Diane (54.32); 105th Diane (54.32); 106th Diane (54.32); 107th Diane (54.32); 108th Diane (54.32); 109th Diane (54.32); 110th Diane (54.32); 111th Diane (54.32); 112th Diane (54.32); 113th Diane (54.32); 114th Diane (54.32); 115th Diane (54.32); 116th Diane (54.32); 117th Diane (54.32); 118th Diane (54.32); 119th Diane (54.32); 120th Diane (54.32); 121st Diane (54.32); 122nd Diane (54.32); 123rd Diane (54.32); 124th Diane (54.32); 125th Diane (54.32); 126th Diane (54.32); 127th Diane (54.32); 128th Diane (54.32); 129th Diane (54.32); 130th Diane (54.32); 131st Diane (54.32); 132nd Diane (54.32); 133rd Diane (54.32); 134th Diane (54.32); 135th Diane (54.32); 136th Diane (54.32); 137th Diane (54.32); 138th Diane (54.32); 139th Diane (54.32); 140th Diane (54.32); 141st Diane (54.32); 142nd Diane (54.32); 143rd Diane (54.32); 144th Diane (54.32); 145th Diane (54.32); 146th Diane (54.32); 147th Diane (54.32); 148th Diane (54.32); 149th Diane (54.32); 150th Diane (54.32); 151st Diane (54.32); 152nd Diane (54.32); 153rd Diane (54.32); 154th Diane (54.32); 155th Diane (54.32); 156th Diane (54.32); 157th Diane (54.32); 158th Diane (54.32); 159th Diane (54.32); 160th Diane (5

RUGBY UNION: Even England's best are blighted as pressure for league points puts paid to expansive play



Hands on experience: Rob Andrew, of Wasps, gets to grips with a potential problem posed by Bath, which is more than he did with his kicking at goal on Saturday

Photograph: Peter Jay

Wasps kick entertainment into touch

Patently there is something seriously amiss with English club rugby when week by week, with increasing predictability matched by a deadly monotony, the best when they come together produce the worst. Wasps v Bath, third v first, was a shocker but why should we have expected any different?

It is a dismal predicament when the quest for two points and its attendant anxiety so outweigh other, less pragmatic considerations. Only the other week, Tony Russ of Leicester confessed after Bath had won at Welford Road that victory playing badly would always be preferable to defeat playing well and I dare say there is not a coach in England who would not honestly say the same.

On this reckoning Bath, by beating Wasps 15-6, derived some satisfaction – modest and grim though it was – from events at Sudbury. But for Wasps the unlikely fact that, but for a desperate kicking display

by Rob Andrew of all people, they would very likely have won was of no consolation.

Indeed more desperate even than Andrew's six penalty misses out of seven and three missed drop-shots from four is the apparently conscious decision of the Wasps players to forsake their running game in favour of a dire diet of punting – utter stodge – which deserves neither credit nor success.

This is made more baffling by the fairly recent assertion of Rob Smith, the Wasps coach, that the wide game they were then enthusiastically espousing was the right way to beat the Baths and Leicesters just as much as lesser success.

But are we in the entertainment business? The evidence of this season suggests not. Or, if this was entertainment, it was for masochists. Jonathan Callard and Andrew exchanged early penalties but thereafter did not locate the target until Andrew gave Wasps the lead with his drop goal and Callard converted the second of the tries by Adedayo Adebayo with which Bath then seized the day.

Andrew persistently had kicks of various types charged down and eventually injury was added to indignity when he collided with Ben Clarke after

globe to see the best English rugby had to offer. The frightening reality is that indeed he had.

We can take it that if his players played like that it would more than his job was worth. "If you had 30,000 people paying eight quid each to watch that, how many would come back the next week?" Lew mused. "You can't afford that if you are in the entertainment business."

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This is not what Newcastle United Sporting Club are paying a large sum of money for and it is surely time for our new director of rugby development to devote his energies exclusively to spending Sir John Hall's millions. Getting from Newcastle to north London three times a week will be a luxury and a dis-

traction as long as it continues, and more especially as long as Newcastle continue as they now are candidates not for the First but for the Third Division.

They could become the first rugby club to spend their way out of trouble, but no amount of money can buy the spirit of corps that has carried Bath for so many years through so many hard times. Saturday's match was a classic of its kind, almost as if protracted defence were a necessary precondition of the devastating attacking riposte that followed.

Afterwards John Hall (no relation), the Bath manager, could afford the indulgence of describing much of his team's play as "totally inept", though they would be well advised to note the threat explicit in his remarks that others would follow Victor Ubogu out of the side if they continued to "operate in the comfort zone".

Ubogu is an interesting and rather puzzling figure in the

Bath context, because he so obviously does not fit into the collective framework which is a greater strength than any of the club's exceptional individual talents. For an England player to be dropped is striking enough, but for those who dropped him to explain that he is not up to it amounts to a public humiliation.

"Vic knows the score," Hall said. "He isn't as fit as he should be. We want to play a game that means the ball is in play for 30-plus minutes and our target is to have it in play for 40 minutes. We believe Vic at the moment is not capable of operating at that level. Having said that, when Victor Ubogu is at the top of his game he is probably our best prop."

Only "probably"?

As the game turned out, Ubogu may have been a good one to miss, with Ed Morrison's pedestrian refereeing a perfect accompaniment to persistently discordant rugby. Rob Smith's theory is that

referees, under instruction from on high, are picking up on the wrong offences and his case for stricter policing of offside is unarguable, if only because his own team spent so much of Saturday's game with impunity in exactly that position.

"The interpretation of the laws is making teams very reluctant to play with the ball," Smith said. "I really do believe that with a bit more freedom both these teams would be more willing to express themselves but as things stand it is actually a disadvantage to move the ball." Coming from an apostle of attacking rugby, this a

little surprising.

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Ubogu is an interesting and

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Commentary



STEVE BATE

A ferocious tackle by Andy Robinson in the build-up to the second try, and was led away to have five stitches in his forehead and eight in his mouth.

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BORO'S BOY FROM BRAZIL: 22-year-old has the talent and tenacity to cope with the rigours of a Teesside winter

Premiership ready to rise to Juninho

The arrival of the Brazilian is a significant moment for English football, argues Glenn Moore

Forget Dennis Bergkamp, Ruud Gullit and Jürgen Klinsmann, even Andrea Silenzi. This is the big one, the transfer that finally signifies a shift in power from Serie A to the Premiership.

Unlike the others Juninho, the 22-year-old Brazilian midfield player who signed for Middlesbrough from São Paulo for £4.75m over the weekend, was wanted in Italy. Most of the big names who have come to England in the last few seasons had their start in the sun, some without much success. While Bergkamp and Gullit came here this summer the really big names, Hristo Stoichkov, Roberto Carlos and Roberto Baggio, either went to, or stayed in, Italy.

Now the Premiership has hired one of the world's outstanding talents to these shores. As Terry Venables, the England coach said: "He is class and English football cannot have too many class players." If he fails it will not be for lack of ability. This summer he destroyed England at Wembley before taking Brazil to the final of the *Copa America*.

Even more remarkable is the identity of his new employers. With apologies to Middlesbrough, they are not Manchester United or Arsenal, or even Newcastle. Not yet. But, given the ambition of Steve Gibson, the chairman, and the reputation and drive of Bryan Robson, the manager, it may not be long before they are alongside the giants in performance, if not tradition. "He is the best player in South America and a really big signing for us," Robson said yesterday.

But what will Juninho make of Middlesbrough? São Paulo is not the Copacabana, and Teesside's industrial skyline may not be as big a shock to Juninho as might be imagined. But, while the area has its pluses the winter climate is not among them.

The only precedent is an unhappy one. Mirandinha, the Brazilian striker who joined Newcastle in September 1987.

Juninho enjoyed the English reaction to him in the Umbro Cup. "I would like to thank English supporters for their appreciation of the way Brazil try to play," he said at the time.

Goram's half-chance

Scottish football

DAVID MCKINNEY

Craig Brown has opened the door for a return to Scotland for Andy Goram, the Rangers goalkeeper whose international future was compromised when he pulled out of the European Championship qualifier against Greece in Austria because he was not mentally attuned for the game.

The Scotland manager will give Goram, his hip strain permitting, 45 minutes of action in the midweek friendly in Sweden with Jim Leighton, the Hibernian keeper, being used for the other half of the match. Brown explained his decision, saying: "I don't see this as a cop-out because we have two very good goalkeepers and Jim Leighton doesn't deserve to be dropped."

Goram was a key man for Rangers on Saturday as they travelled to Aberdeen with

out Paul Gascoigne and Ally McCoist through injury, among others, and won 1-0. Rangers' goalscorer was Craig Moore, the Australian who had come on as second-half substitute.

Hanging on to Rangers' coat tails has become a habit for Celtic and they could thank their Dutch striker, Pierre Van Hoofdank, and John Collins for the goals that gave them a 2-1 home win over Partick Thistle and kept them two points behind their great rivals.

The match was watched by representatives of Paris St-Germain, who face Celtic in the European Cup-Winners' Cup. Their director of football, Jean-François Domergue said: "I would not like to come here looking for a result in the return leg because the atmosphere will inspire Celtic."

Hibernian are fourth following their 2-1 win over Falkirk, a result that pushes the Bairns to the bottom of the league, they were signed by Fry from

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Birmingham City

Southend United

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